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סגירות ישראל
לינדון

JEM

103.01

21st April 1997

Dear Prime Minister

I have been asked by my Prime Minister, Mr Benjamin Netanyahu, to transmit the following letter:

Dear Prime Minister

At present, Israel's efforts are devoted to finding ways to resume talks with the Palestinian Authority, but I would like to address a problem which I believe we share to a considerable extent: the danger of Iran.

Last week's finding by a German court of direct Iranian backing of a 1992 terrorist attack in Berlin's Mykonos Cafe raises serious questions about the future of the European "critical dialogue" with Teheran. I know European Foreign Ministries are expected to meet on April 29 to consider European options including a freeze on certain contacts with Iran. We hope that the EU will follow the British lead in formulating strong and meaningful measures.

Israel has had a long-term problem with Iranian support via Syria, of terrorist attacks whether through the Lebanese Hizballah or the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. But now we face an existential threat as Iran feverishly seeks to obtain the capability of striking Israel with 1300 kilometre range ballistic missiles armed with non-conventional warheads.

With the help of Russian technicians, the Iranians have performed a ground test of such a missile. It is only a matter of time before they have a fully operational weapon. Our intelligence indicates that Iranian intentions are not confined to striking Israel. This missile program is intended to produce a 3,500 kilometre range capability and even greater ranges in the future. In the short term, Israeli security is threatened. But in the medium term European security is also at stake.

These developments should, I believe, be taken into account in your coming deliberations. It is critical for all of us that the Iranian long-range missile program be halted. This can be achieved by direct pressure on Iran. It is essential that Iran understands that its missile programs are firmly opposed by a broad consensus of nations, including the member states of the European Union.

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מדינת ישראל

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It is difficult to accept the argument that if the Russians drop out of the program, the Chinese and North Koreans will replace them. Russian missile technology is far more advanced than that of any other missile exporting country. Termination of Russian-Iranian co-operations means the end of the long-range Iranian missile program.

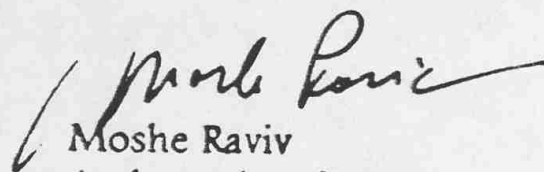
The upcoming deliberations over the future of EU-Iranian relations provide an opportunity to address this urgent matter. For many European countries it seems difficult to comprehend the magnitude of this potential threat. For a century, the primary threats to global stability came from the European continent - not from the Middle East. And in the last forty years Europeans became accustomed to look eastward rather than southward to identify the main challenge to peace. But Iran with strategic reach requires all of us to revise our basic thinking and re-orient our diplomatic efforts accordingly.

I believe no development in the Middle East poses a greater danger to the security of Israel and the security of the west as a whole than the developments in Iran. It is my sincere hope that the EU will take this threat into account in formulating its future Iran policy.

Sincerely yours

Benjamin Netanyahu

Yours sincerely


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