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FROM TEL AVIV 291135Z JUN 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 281 OF 29 JUNE 1982

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK, PRIORITY WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, DAMASCUS, AMMAN, JEDDA AND CAIRO.

MY TELS NO 277 AND 278: ISRAEL/LEBANON

1. IT IS PLAIN TO ALL THAT THE CRUCIAL STAGE HAS NOW BEEN REACHED. WE ARE NOT PRIVY TO ISRAELI THINKING. NOR DO WE HAVE THE BENEFIT OF KNOWING EXACTLY WHAT IS PASSING IN THE HABIB NEGOTIATIONS OR FROM WASHINGTON. BUT I FEEL I SHOULD MAKE THE BEST GUESS I CAN ABOUT THE WAY ISRAELI MINDS ARE WORKING AS REGARDS THE PLO.

2. MY COMMENTS ON ISRAEL'S STATED CONDITIONS FOR THE PLO TO HAND OVER THEIR WEAPONS AND LEAVE BEIRUT AND LEBANON ARE:

(A) DEPARTURE FROM BEIRUT IS AN ABSOLUTE ISRAELI REQUIREMENT. WITHOUT IT THE ISRAELIS RECKON THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE UNABLE TO RE-ESTABLISH THEIR AUTHORITY SEMICOLON

(B) PRIOR LAYING DOWN OF WEAPONS IS ALSO CONSIDERED BY THE ISRAELIS AS ESSENTIAL. THIS IS NOT BECAUSE THE ISRAELIS ARE CONFIDENT THE PLO SOLDIERS WOULD REMAIN DISARMED FOR LONG, BUT RATHER BECAUSE DEPARTURE MUST BE SEEN AS SURRENDER. THE WORLD (NOT LEAST THE PALESTINIANS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES) MUST BE CONVINCED THAT THE PLO WERE SO DEFEATED THAT THEY COULD NOT TAKE



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(C) WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON. THIS IS CERTAINLY AN ISRAELI OBJECTIVE. BUT JUST AS THE ISRAELIS MAY SETTLE IN THE END FOR A RESIDUAL SYRIAN PRESENCE IN THE BEKAA, SO SOME FORM OF CONTINUED PLO PRESENCE IN LEBANON MIGHT JUST BE NEGOTIABLE IF OTHER ISRAELI CONDITIONS WERE MET. THEY WOULD CERTAINLY INSIST ON THE PLO BEING LIMITED TO THE FAR NORTH OR TO AREAS OF EASTERN LEBANON UNDER SYRIAN CONTROL, AS WELL AS PLO ACTIVITIES BEING TIGHTLY CONSTRAINED BY ANY NEW CONCORDAT WITH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. THE ISRAELIS WOULD HAVE LITTLE FAITH IN ANY PLO UNDERTAKINGS. BUT I WOULD NOT EXCLUDE SOME FLEXIBILITY PROVIDED BEIRUT AND MOST OF LEBANON ARE TO COME UNDER THE GOVERNMENT WITH A REASONABLE PROSPECT OF CENTRAL AUTHORITY BEING BUTTRESSED BY THE PHALANGE IN CHRISTIAN AREAS, BY AN INTERNATIONAL FORCE IN THE 45 KM BUFFER ZONE, AND BY HADDAD/ISRAELI FORCES CLOSE TO THE FRONTIER.

3. I HAVE ALREADY INDICATED TWO REASONS WHICH I BELIEVE MAKE THE ISRAELI INSIST ON THE PLO BEING EXPELLED FROM BEIRUT: FIRST THAT THEY WILL THEREBY CLEAR THE WAY FOR A STRONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, SECONDLY THAT THEY WISH TO DISCREDIT THE PLO AS A FIGHTING FORCE. THEY CANNOT SERIOUSLY EXPECT TO ERADICATE THE PLO FOR EVER SINCE OTHER PALESTINIANS CAN TAKE THE PLACE OF FALLEN COMRADES AND NEW WEAPONS CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND. EVENTUALLY THEY WILL ALSO HAVE TO REPATRIATE IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER THE SEVERAL THOUSAND PLO PRISONERS THEY ALREADY HOLD. BUT HAVING COME THIS FAR THE ISRAELIS CANNOT NOW AFFORD TO LET THE PLO EMERGE WITH ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT BE REPRESENTED AS A DRAW IN BEIRUT. ISRAEL MUST SHOW THAT THE PLO HAS BEEN DECISIVELY DEFEATED.

4. THE OPTIONS FOR ISRAEL REMAIN:

(A) NEGOTIATION. STILL THEIR PREFERRED COURSE BUT TIME IS NOT ON THEIR SIDE SEMICOLON

(B) PROLONGED SIEGE. WOULD NOT SOLVE ISRAEL'S DILEMMA IF MERELY AN EXTENSION OF THE PRESENT CEASEFIRE. ALSO CARRIES ECONOMIC AND INTERNAL POLITICAL PENALTIES FOR ISRAEL WHILE INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES BUILD UP SEMICOLON

(C) ALL-OUT ASSAULT. I BELIEVE THE ISRAELIS WOULD STEEL THEMSELVES TO UNDERTAKE THIS IF THEY THOUGHT IT WOULD WORK. BUT INCREASINGLY I DOUBT WHETHER THEY THEMSELVES COULD EXPECT TO ACHIEVE RESULTS QUICKLY ENOUGH TO MAKE THIS DECISIVE SEMICOLON

(D) SALAMI TACTICS. MY OWN GUESS IS THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE MORE LIKELY TO RESUME AIR AND ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENT AGAINST SELECTED TARGETS PLUS EDGING FORWARD ON THE GROUND AND INTERDICTION OF



(D) SALAMI TACTICS. MY OWN GUESS IS THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE MORE LIKELY TO RESUME AIR AND ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENT AGAINST SELECTED TARGETS, PLUS EDGING FORWARD ON THE GROUND AND INTERDICTION OF WATER AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES. THE AIM AS BEFORE WILL BE TO BREAK THE PLO WILL TO RESIST BY INTENSIFYING THE MILITARY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURES.

5. ISRELI WARNINGS OF ONLY A FEW DAYS BEING ALLOWED FOR THE PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD IN MY VIEW BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE. THE ISRAELIS WILL CLAIM THAT ANY RESUMPTION OF ATTACKS ON THEIR PART IS IN RESPONSE TO AN ALLEGED BREACH OF THE CEASEFIRE SOMEWHERE AROUND BEIRUT OR ELSEWHERE IN LEBANON.

6. REPETITION TO BEIRUT LEFT FOR FCO DECISION.

MOBERLY

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