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By NARA Date 6-05-02

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Department of State TELEGRAM

SECRET

Z 231403Z OCT 73
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 0243
BT
•S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 8513

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23 OCT 73 Z15 09

MEIR - KEATING
10/23

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E O 11652: XGDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, IS, XF
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER MEIR

1. AT HER REQUEST, I CALLED ON PRIMIN MEIR AT 12:30 TODAY. ALSO PRESENT WERE MORDECHAI GAZIT, DIRGEN IN PRIMIN'S OFFICE AND DCM.

2. THE PRIMIN INITIATED CONVERSATION BY EXPRESSING HER GREAT CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBILITY FOR QUICK EXCHANGE OF POWS, NOTING THIS COULD BE MAJOR ITEM IN OPPPOSITION (LIKUD ATTACK) AGAINST GOVERNMENT IN KNESSET MEETING SCHEDULED FOR 6:00 PM TODAY. I FORTUNATELY WAS ABLE TO HAND HER COPY OF MCCLOSKEY'S STATEMENT (STATE 208876) WHICH SHE READ WITH GREAT RELIEF AND APPRECIATION NOTING "OH, GOOD: IV'VE BEEN WORRIED ABOUT THIS ALL MORNING." SHE GAVE INSTRUCTIONS THAT THE STATEMENT BE FEATURED ON ISRAEL RADIO THROUGH THE DAY.

3. SHE CONTINUED FOR AWHILE ON THE SUBJECT OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION NOTING THAT THE OPPOSITION WILL NOT ACCEPT THE CEASEFIRE AND INDEED MAY MAKE THE ISSUE A VOTE OF CONFICENCE THIS AFTERNOON. SHE WAS SURE OF WINNING A MAJORITY VOTE ENDORSING THE GOVT'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE CEASEFIRE BUT THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES WOULD SHOW THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION TO THE GOVT'S ACTION.

4. MRS MEIR THEN EXPRESSED HER GREAT APPRECIATION FOR THE SECRETARY'S VISIT YESTERDAY. SHE NOTED THAT HER CONVERSATION WITH THE SECRETARY HELPED TO CLEAR UP SOME THINGS THAT WERE OBSCURED BY THE SPEED WITH WHICH EVENTS PROCEEDED. SHE REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES HER SATISFACTION WITH THE RESULTS OF THE VISIT.

5. I NOTED THAT THE BRITISH AMB HAD JUST CALLED ON ME AND, INTER ALIA, WAS PROBING FOR INFORMATION CONCERNING HIS "IMPRESSION" THAT THE GOI AND US MIGHT HAVE SOME MAJOR DIFFERENCES OVER THE UN RESOLUTION. I ASSURED HER THAT I HAD DISABUSED HIM OF ANY SUCH NOTION AT WHICH POINT MRS MEIR REMARKED "IT'S TOO BAD YOU COULDN'T HAVE MADE HIM HAPPIER."

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SHE THEN RELATED A SERIES OF RECENT HISTORICAL ANECDOETS ILLUSTRATING WHY ISRAEL HAS SUCH A LOW OPINION OF "ALBION PEFFIDE."

6. WE THEN TURNED TO THE QUESTION OF THE CEASEFIRE. MRS MEIR QUICKLY RAN OVER THE SITUATION IN THE NORTH, EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT THE SYRIANS WILL QUICKLY AGREE TO THE CEASEFIRE. SHE NOTED IN THIS RESPECT THAT THE IRAQIS HAVE BEEN MOST UNHELPFUL TO SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD BY THEIR NEGATIVE ATTITUDES. SHE STATED SHE WAS FRANKLY PUZZLED AS TO WHAT THE JORDANIANS WERE UP TO BY OFFICIALLY AGREEING TO THE CEASEFIRE AND THEN "LEAVING THEIR TANKS IN SYRIA." SHE SAID THAT THE KING "HAD GOOD REASON" TO PULL HIS TANKS BACK SINCE, AFTER ALL, EGYPT WAS THE FIRST ARAB COUNTRY TO ACCEPT THE CEASEFIRE. POLITICALLY, THEREFORE, HUSSEIN IS COVERED. AS SHE HAD DONE PREVIOUSLY, SHE EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING FOR HUSSEIN'S POSITION AND THERE WAS NO SUGGESTION IN HER REMARKS THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE CONTEMPLATING ANY ACTION AGAINST JORDAN.

7. AS WE TURNED TO THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH, I NOTED TO MRS MEIR THAT WE WERE PLEASED WITH TIMELINESS OF OUR IDF BRIEFINGS ON THE CEASEFIRE SITUATION ON THE SUEZ FRONT. IT APPEARED FROM THESE REPORTS THAT THE EGYPTIANS WERE ENGAGED IN WHOLESALE VIOLATION OF THE CEASEFIRE, AT LEAST IN THE SOUTHERN SECTOR, AND ISRAEL WAS RESPONDING TO THESE ATTACKS. I NOTED THE "DELICACY" OF THE MATTER I WAS ABOUT TO RAISE, BUT I ASSUMED SHE RECOGNIZED THAT THERE WOULD BE SOME WHO MIGHT VIEW WITH SOME SCEPTICISM INFO FROM GOI SOURCES AND WHO WOULD WONDER WHETHER OR NOT THE ISRAELIS MIGHT NOT BE TAKING INITIATIVES IN VIOLATION OF THE CEASEFIRE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE CERTAIN MILITARY OBJECTIVES.

8. MRS MEIR REPLIED SHE COULD UNDERSTAND THE POINT I RAISED. SHE THEN WENT ON TO POINT OUT THAT WHEN THE GOI WAS FORMULATING ITS POSITION ON THE CEASEFIRE RESOLUTION, THE ISRAELI MILITARY COMMANDERS "PLEADED" FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS MORE TIME IN THE SOUTH IN ORDER TO FINISH OFF THE EGYPTIANS IN THAT SECTOR. THE CABINET SAID A FLAT NO AND THE ORDERS WENT OUT THAT THE CEASEFIRE MUST BE RESPECTED SCRUPULOUSLY. ISRAEL HAS, HOWEVER, ORDERED ITS TROOPS TO CONTINUE FIGHTING UNTIL AND UNLESS THE EGYPTIANS STOP. IN THIS RESPECT SHE DESCRIBED HER MEETING EARLY LAST NIGHT WITH IDF LEADERS TO CONSIDER REPORTS THAT THE EGYPTIANS WERE CONTINUING TO SHOOT. SHE CONCLUDED AT THAT TIME THAT THIS WAS NOT ABNORMAL SINCE SOME VIOLATIONS COULD BE EXPECTED FOR A

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VARIETY OF REASONS IN THE FIRST FEW HOURS AFTER A CEASEFIRE. (THE MFA TOOK THE SAME POSITION WHEN WE QUERIED THEM ON THIS SUBJECT LAST NIGHT AT 10:00 P.M.). LATER IN THE EVENING, HOWEVER, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT WHAT WAS HAPPENING, PARTICULARLY IN THE SOUTHERN SECTOR, WAS NOT ISOLATED VIOLATIONS BUT THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD LAUNCHED MAJOR MILITARY ATTACKS. SHE SAID THAT THE FIGHTING LAST NIGHT AND TODAY WAS EXTREMELY HEAVY. ALTHOUGH SHE WOULD LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT THE EGYPTIAN INITIATIVES CAME FROM LOCAL COMMANDERS WHO WERE TRYING TO COVER UP THEIR PREVIOUS LIES TO HEADQUARTERS AS CONCERNS THEIR VICTORIES, SHE WAS AFRAID THE MAGNITUDE OF THE FIGHTING SUGGESTED "ORDERS FROM THE TOP."

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9. MRS. MEIR WONDERED ALOUD "WHAT DO THE RUSSIANS DO WITH THE EGYPTIANS NOW?" I ASKED IF SHE THOUGHT THE RENEWED GROUND HOSTILITIES IN THE SOUTH REPRESENTED A DANGER OF THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT RENEGGING ON ITS ACCEPTANCE OF THE CEASEFIRE. SHE REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE, AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT, AND REPEATED THE PROBLEM WITH EGYPTIAN COMMANDERS IN THE FIELD NOT TELLING THE TRUTH TO CAIRO, WITH THE RESULT THAT SADAT APPARENTLY DID NOT HAVE ANY ACCURATE MILITARY DATA BASE ON WHICH TO BASE POLITICAL DECISIONS.

10. MRS. MEIR THEN NOTED THAT, IN HER CONVERSATION YESTERDAY WITH THE SECRETARY AND ASST SECRETARY SISCO, SHE HAD DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM OF LACK OF A MECHANISM TO ASSURE A CEASEFIRE. SHE SAW MERIT IN THEIR SUGGESTION THAT ISRAELI MILITARY COMMANDERS ON THE SUEZ FRONT, PARTICULARLY WHERE SHOOTING IS GOING ON, MIGHT TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO CONTACT THEIR EGYPTIAN COUNTERAPRTS TO ARRANGE LOCAL TRUCES. SHE GAVE THE IMPRESSION, HOWEVER, THAT SHE HAD DISCUSSED THIS WITH HER MILITARY COMMANDERS WHO WERE NOT TOO ENTHUSIASTIC WITH THE IDEA SINCE SUCH HEAVY FIGHTING WAS GOING ON. I SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE WORTH A TRY EVEN IF THE GYPTIANS DID NOT RESPOND SINCE THE EFFORT ITSELF WOULD HELP CERTIFY THE GOI'S BONAFIDES IN WISHING TO HAVE A REAL CEASEFIRE. MRS. MEIR SAID SHE THOUGHT THIS WAS WORTH RAISING AGAIN WITH THE MILITARY AND WOULD DO SO. #3 ,953$,HOWEVER, THAT ALTHOUGH HER SPEECH TODAY IN THE KNESSET SHOULD MAKE CLEAR ISRAEL'S SINCERE DESIRE FOR THE CEASEFIRE ALONG THE EGYPTIAN FRONT, SHE HAS TO ALSO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT ZSADAT CANNOT HAVE IT BOTH WAYS" - HE CANNOT OFFICIALLY AND PUBLICLY ACCEPT THE CEASEFIRE AND THEN CLANDESTINELY GIVE ORDERS TO HIS SOLDIERS TO CONTINUE SHOOTING.

11. IN THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION, MRS.MEIR NOTED THAT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE SECRETARY UNDERSTOOD THE DILEMMA OF TRYING TO FIND A MEANS OF SETTING UP A MECHANISM TO POLICE A CEASEFIRE AND THE DESIRE TO AVOID INVOLVING THE UN. SHE NOTED IN THIS RESPECT THAT SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM WOULD ONLY BE TOO ANXIOUS TO GET HIMSELF AND THE ENTIRE UN INVOLVED. IN THE

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INTEREST OF ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING CEASEFIRE, HOWEVER, SHE DID NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF USING THE UNTSO SINCE, ASN AN ORGANIZATION IN PLACE, IT MIGHT BE ABLE TO TAKE ON THE CHORE WITHOUT HAVING TO GO BACK TO THE UN FOR A NEW "MANDATE" AND THUS GIVE WALDHEIM AN OPENING THROUGH WHICH TO RUN INTO THE ACTION. SHE ASKED IF WE COULD TELL HERE WHERE THE UNTSO OBSERVERS ARE WHO USED TO BE ALONG THE SUEZ. I TOLD HER E WE WOULD CHECK OUR FILES AND BE IN TOUGH WITH HER OFFICE IMMEDIATELY. (ACCORDING TO OUR FILES THE UNTSO OBSERVERS WHO WERE ALONG THE WEST BANK OF THE CANAL ARE IN CAIRO WHILE THOSE WHO WERE ALONG TH EAST BANK HAVE BEEN MOVED TO JERUSALEM. WE HAVE SO INFORMED THE PRIMIN'S OFFICE.)

12. COMMENT. MCCLOSKEY'S STATEMENT RE POW'S WILL GO LONG WAY TOWARDS HELPING MRS. MEIR WITH PARLIAMENTARY DIFFICULTIES LATER TODAY. I CANNOT EVALUATE MRS. MEIR'S CLAIM THAT LACK OF SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE OF MILITARY SITUATION ON GROUND IN CAIRO IS A MAJOR FACTOR IN WHATEVER MISTAKES SADAT MAY BE MAKING NOW AS CONCERNSMILITARY SITUATION. I NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT EBAN MAKE SAME COMMENTS TO ME IN MY CONVERSATION WITH HIM ON SUNDAY EVENING. AND,IF TRUE,I HAVE NO SOLUTIONS TO OFFER. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT ISRAELIS ARE GOING TO CONTINUE TO SHOOT BACK AND IF EGYPTIAN ATTACKS CONTINUE I WOULD NOT BE AT ALL SURPRISED IF THE ISRAELIS WERE TO LAUNCH AN ATTACK DESIGNED TO WIPE OUT THE EGYPTIAN THIRD ARMY ON THE EAST BANK OF THE CANAL. IF THINGS REACH THIS POINT, I'S NOT SURE WHAT KIND OF A CEASEFIRE WILL BE LEFT TEO BUILD UPON. I ASSUME WE ARE IN CONTACT WITH THE SOVIETS ON THIS SUBJECT AND CAN ONLY HOPE THEY SHARE OUR CONCERNS.

13. I HAVE JUST SEEN USUN 4139. MRS. MEIR DENIES ISRAELIS HAVE TAKEN INITIATIVE TO VIOLATE CEASEFIRE, BLAMES THE EGYPTIANS AND NOTES IDF GIVEN ORDERS TO SHOOT BACK.

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