

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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8218

October 16, 1990

*Brent: suggest you
take this in to
Wednesday a.m.
meeting.*

(RH)

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM: RICHARD N. HAASS *(RH)*

SUBJECT: Letter to Israeli Prime Minister Shamir

Attached at Tab I is a memo to the President forwarding a response (Tab A) to a letter from Israeli Prime Minister Shamir (Tab B). You should act on this as soon as possible given that we want to see if we can influence the Israelis before they dig themselves (and possibly us) in any deeper.

Secretary Baker has cleared this language.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memo to the President at Tab I.

Attachments

- Tab I Memo to the President
- Tab A Response to Prime Minister Shamir
- Tab B Letter from Prime Minister Shamir

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Declassify on: OADR

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
October 18, 1990

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ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT *B*

SUBJECT: Response to Letter from Israeli Prime Minister
Yitzhak Shamir

SIGNED

Purpose

To try to persuade Prime Minister Shamir to soften his opposition to the mission authorized by the UN Security Council to investigate the events in Jerusalem of October 8.

Background

As you know, UN Security Council Resolution 672 calls upon the Secretary General to send a mission to Israel to investigate and report back on the events of October 8 that resulted in the deaths of more than twenty Palestinians. Thus far, the Israeli Government has refused to cooperate, saying that it would not even "receive" the delegation. The Israelis are clearly worried that by cooperating they would risk compromising their claim to Jerusalem. While we do not accept their claim, this is not the time to pick a fight. My concern is that the Israelis risk stimulating additional Security Council resolutions, which promise only to confront us with painful choices while providing Saddam with the distraction and the linkage that he clearly wants.

As you can see, Prime Minister Shamir has written you a tough letter that shows little give (Tab B). The proposed response (Tab A) argues as best we can that he and his government ought to reconsider their hard line.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the response to Prime Minister Shamir at Tab A.

Attachments

Tab A Response to Prime Minister Shamir
Tab B Letter from Prime Minister Shamir

cc: Vice President
Chief of Staff

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Declassify on: OADR

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 23, 1990

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Thank you for your letter of October 15. Let me say at the outset, Mr. Prime Minister, how deeply shocked and grieved I am over the senseless killings of innocent Israelis in Jerusalem during the last several days. I hope you will convey to the families of the victims our condolences and prayers. All Americans share with me the firm conviction that further hatred and killing will only make more difficult the reconciliation between your country and its neighbors that we all want to see evolve.

I wanted to respond quickly to your letter, given the importance of the matter you raised and my firm conviction that we ought to do everything possible to avoid a situation that could damage interests important to each of us. The recent tragedy has deepened my concern.

The United States voted for UN Security Council Resolution 672 because we thought it important to be on record opposing what we believe was unacceptable behavior by Israeli security forces. Although we would have preferred different language in some instances, we concluded that the final version of the text was acceptable and certainly preferable to an alternative being promoted by the PLO.

Our position in the Security Council was motivated by a genuine concern over what had taken place and the desire to see such occurrences avoided in the future. Our position would have been the same had there not been the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Let me add that our support for this resolution implied no criticism of Israel's policy governing access to the holy places, which has been praiseworthy; nor was our

vote in any way intended to slight the harm done to those of the Jewish faith whose prayers were interrupted by stones. There are and can be no excuses for that.

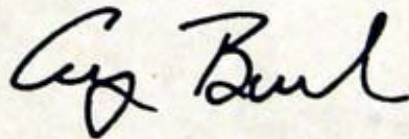
Much of your letter focuses upon Jerusalem itself. I am well aware of your position on the subject. I would expect that you are no less aware of positions held by the United States since 1967, including that Jerusalem should never be divided again, that it should remain united, and that its final status should be determined by negotiations.

I also expect that we are not going to be able to eliminate at present any differences between us on the final status of Jerusalem. This said, it is not essential that we do so now, because, as our position states, Jerusalem's future is a matter for negotiation.

I would hope, however, that you would not allow such long term concerns to interfere with the more circumscribed matter at hand, namely, the Security Council's call for the Secretary General to dispatch an envoy to investigate and report on the events of October 8. I would go so far as to express my hope that your government would actually cooperate with this mission. Israel's long and distinguished record in complying with the rule of law, as well as the investigation your own government has commissioned into the events of October 8, should be brought to bear so that the mission receives a full and accurate account of what transpired, in order to better reach any conclusions. It would be ironic, and in the end counterproductive, if the Government of Israel were to transform the issue into one either of the status of Jerusalem or Israel's prerogatives versus those of the UN Security Council. In either case, you would run the risk of placing yourselves, as well as us, in a most difficult and potentially unfortunate position.

Mr. Prime Minister, I believe it is essential that we not lose sight of what ought and indeed must be the focus of the international community at present--Iraq's invasion, occupation, and now destruction of Kuwait. As you yourself note in your letter, both of us share a vital interest in success against Saddam Hussein. It is a common strategic interest, and it is an interest that once fulfilled can pave the way for creating a far more stable, secure, and peaceful Middle East. We both want that, and I know that the people of Israel yearn for that. I would, therefore, ask that your government cooperate with the mission called for by Security Council Resolution 672.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aqil Bahl". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'A'.

His Excellency
Yitzhak Shamir
Prime Minister of Israel