

MIDDLE EAST

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TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1826 OF 14 OCTOBER

INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK, PARIS, UKREP BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN, MIDDLE EAST POSTS, MOSCOW

MY VISITS TO SYRIA AND EGYPT

1. I SHOULD LIKE SHULTZ TO HAVE A FULL ACCOUNT OF MY VISITS TO DAMASCUS AND CAIRO (9/10 AND 11/12 OCTOBER RESPECTIVELY).

PLEASE THEREFORE PASS THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM ME TO SHULTZ. YOU SHOULD ALSO BRIEF THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN MORE DETAIL AT A SENIOR LEVEL, DRAWING ON REPORTING TELEGRAMS FROM DAMASCUS (284) AND CAIRO (468).

BEGINS: DEAR GEORGE, I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO HAVE MY IMPRESSIONS OF MY RECENT MIDDLE EAST TRIP TO DAMASCUS AND CAIRO. THE AIM OF THE VISIT WAS PARTLY TO GET TO KNOW A LITTLE MORE OF MY OPPOSITE NUMBERS IN BOTH COUNTRIES AND MEET THEIR RESPECTIVE PRESIDENTS, BUT IT WAS ALSO AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS AT FIRST HAND AT A CRUCIAL TIME IN MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMACY, WHEN SO MUCH IS AT STAKE.

I WAS MADE VERY WELCOME IN BOTH COUNTRIES, PERHAPS SURPRISINGLY SO IN SYRIA, GIVEN THE TRADITIONALLY HARDLINE APPROACH WHICH SHE HAS ADOPTED TO MOST OF THE PROBLEMS WE DISCUSSED. NATURALLY I FOUND MANY MORE POINTS OF CONVERGENCE WITH THE EGYPTIANS, WHOSE VIEW IS VERY CLOSE TO OURS ON MOST ISSUES. BUT I WAS STRUCK BY THE INTEREST SHOWN BY THE SYRIANS IN THE VARIOUS PROPOSALS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE, AND THEIR APPARENT READINESS TO AVOID STRIKING WHOLLY NEGATIVE ATTITUDES. ON ISSUES OF CENTRAL IMPORTANCE TO THEM, THERE WERE FEW SIGNS OF REAL FLEXIBILITY, BUT THEY MAY BE READY TO GIVE PEACE EFFORTS A CHANCE.

ON LEBANON, KHADDAM WAS FIRM THAT THE SYRIANS WOULD NOT LEAVE BEFORE THE ISRAELIS, BUT MADE IT CLEAR THEY HAD NO WISH TO STAY

Prime Directive

*You may like to read Dr. Lynn's message to Shultz about his Middle East trip.*

*A. J. C. 15/10*

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INDEFINITELY THEMSELVES. NOR WOULD SYRIA ACCEPT ANY MORE PLO FIGHTERS OR PALESTINIAN FAMILIES FROM LEBANON. MUBARAK ALSO POINTED TO THE DISPERSAL OF THE REMAINING PLO FIGHTERS AS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT PARTS OF THE LEBANON PROBLEM.

HOSTILITY WAS EVIDENT BETWEEN THE SYRIANS AND ARAFAT. I WAS REMINDED SHARPLY THAT ARAFAT DID NOT REPRESENT ALL SHADES OF PALESTINIAN OPINION, AND THE SYRIAN MACHINE BEGAN ATTACKING ARAFAT IN PUBLIC AS SOON AS THE AMMAN TALKS GOT GOING ON 10/11 OCTOBER. THE EGYPTIANS THOUGHT THAT ARAFAT SHOULD BE SUPPORTED, BUT THAT HIS POSITION WAS CURRENTLY WEAK. I BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A GREATER RISK THAN FOR SOME TIME OF A MAJOR SPLIT IN THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT IF EARLY PROGRESS TOWARDS A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IS NOT ACHIEVED SOON. I AM SURE THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE IN WESTERN INTERESTS.

THE SYRIANS AND EGYPTIANS DIFFERED SHARPLY ON FEZ. THE SYRIANS SAID THAT IT WAS THE MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE TO THE ARABS. THE EGYPTIANS CLEARLY REGARDED IT AS AN IRRELEVANCE. BUT THERE WAS SOME SIMILARITY BETWEEN SYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN CRITICISMS OF PRESIDENT REAGAN'S PROPOSALS. KHADDAM REELED OFF TO ME EIGHT QUOTE FUNDAMENTAL GAPS UNQUOTE WHICH HE HAS PROBABLY ALREADY MENTIONED TO YOU AND WILL NO DOUBT WISH TO EXPLORE FURTHER IN WASHINGTON. I TRIED TO ASSURE HIM, ON THE BASIS OF WHAT YOU HAVE TOLD ME, THAT SOME OF HIS ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE US POSITION, PARTICULARLY ON THE NATURE OF YOUR VIEWS ABOUT SELF-DETERMINATION WERE MISTAKEN. FOR HIS PART HASSAN ALI DREW ON THE LETTER HE HAD SENT YOU SETTING OUT EGYPTIAN VIEWS IN DETAIL. AGAIN THE MAIN POINT HE STRESSED WAS THE LACK OF MENTION OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS. BUT HE WAS VERY POSITIVE ABOUT YOUR INITIATIVE AS A WHOLE: AND MUBARAK WAS QUITE CLEAR THAT THE PROPOSALS WERE THE ONLY ONES WITH ANY CHANCE OF IMPLEMENTATION. BOTH BELIEVED PROGRESS MUST BE MADE VERY SOON, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHAT HAPPEND IN LEBANON. KHADDAM AND ASSAD ALSO SAW THE FACT THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD PUT FORWARD A FIRM POSITION AS POSITIVE. BUT OF COURSE THEY WANTED US TO PUT PRESSURE ON YOU TO MOVE CLOSER TO FEZ AND TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE ISRAELIS.

I MADE IT CLEAR TO BOTH SYRIANS AND EGYPTIANS THAT I

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BELIEVED THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS, DESPITE SOME DIFFERENCES WITH VENICE, DESERVED STRONG SUPPORT BECAUSE THEY OFFERED A REALISTIC CHANCE OF PROGRESS. I STRESSED THAT TIME WAS NOT ON THE ARABS' SIDE (A POINT WITH WHICH THE SYRIANS DISAGREED, THOUGH THEY SAID AT ONE POINT THAT THEY WERE READY TO GIVE QUOTE MODERATION UNQUOTE A YEAR OR TWO TO SUCCEED).

MY REMARKS IN DAMASCUS ABOUT PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE POSSIBILITY OF AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE ATTRACTED SOME PRESS INTEREST. IN FACT I MADE CLEAR THAT THERE WERE OTHER OPTIONS, AND THAT IT WAS FOR THE PALESTINIANS TO MAKE THEIR CHOICE, TAKING ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES INTO ACCOUNT.

IN THAT CONTEXT YOU MAY BE INTERESTED THAT KHALID FAHOUM, CHAIRMAN OF THE PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL, TOLD A MEMBER OF MY TEAM WHILE WE WERE IN DAMASCUS THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE PALESTINIANS (ESPECIALLY THOSE IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA) WOULD PROBABLY NOT INSIST ON A PALESTINIAN STATE, BUT THEY COULD NOT YET AFFORD TO SAY SO PUBLICLY: ARAB GOVERNMENTS (BY WHICH HE CLEARLY MEANT SYRIA) WOULD NOT ALLOW THEM TO GIVE UP THIS CARD EARLY ON. HE NEVERTHELESS HOPED THAT THE MOMENTUM CREATED BY THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE WOULD BE SUSTAINED.

NEITHER THE SYRIANS NOR THE EGYPTIANS SAW AN EARLY END TO THE GULF WAR, BUT NEITHER SEEMED TO THINK IT LIKELY TO SPREAD. KHADDAM GAVE AS HIS OPINION THAT IT WOULD GO ON UNTIL THE FALL OF EITHER SADDAM HUSSEIN OR KHOMEINI.

MY CONCLUSION, THOUGH OF COURSE IT CAN ONLY BE A PRELIMINARY ONE, IS THAT THE COMBINATION OF THE FEZ SUMMIT AND THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE HAS CREATED A CLIMATE OF EXPECTATION AND FERMENT IN THE REGION. FIRST REPORTS SUGGEST THAT THE HUSSEIN/ARAFAT TALKS WENT AS WELL AS COULD BE EXPECTED AND THAT THERE MAY WELL BE A REAL OPENING THERE. BUT THIS CLIMATE MUST BE EXPLOITED QUICKLY IF ANYTHING LASTING IS TO COME OUT OF IT.

OTHERWISE THERE IS A RISK THAT POSITIONS WILL OSSIFY ONCE MORE AND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PROGRESS, EVEN A LIMITED MOVE FORWARD, WILL BE LOST AND THE ISRAELIS WILL SIMPLY TAKE THE CHANCE TO MAKE THEIR CONTROL OF THE WEST BANK

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AND GAZA IRREVERSIBLE. I AM NOT SURE THAT THERE IS MUCH THE EGYPTIANS, DESPITE THE HELPFULNESS OF THEIR ATTITUDE, CAN DO TO HELP IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. IT WAS A PITY THAT I WAS IN THE EVENT UNABLE TO GO ON TO JEDDA TO TALK TO THE SAUDIS, WHO HAVE A KEY ROLE TO PLAY. BUT THE POSITION OF THE SYRIANS WILL AS ALWAYS BE VITAL. THE LIKELY INCLUSION OF KHADDAM IN THE ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION TO VISIT WASHINGTON AND LONDON SOON OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE SYRIAN AND OTHER ARAB VIEWS OF THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE IN A FAVOURABLE DIRECTION. THE SYRIANS CLEARLY ATTACHED IMPORTANCE TO THE VISIT.

AS YOU MAY KNOW, I SHALL BE VISITING AMMAN IN A FEW WEEKS' TIME, AND WE SHALL BE SEEING THE ARAB FOLLOW UP COMMISSION AFTER THEY VISIT YOU. I HOPE WE CAN STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH, THEREFORE. MEANWHILE WE MUST DO ALL WE CAN TO KEEP DOORS OPEN AND ENCOURAGE THE ARABS AS A WHOLE TO BELIEVE THAT A MOVE FORWARD IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE. ENDS

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STANDARD

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