

SECRET (see last page).

FROM: THE RT. HON. JULIAN AMERY, M.P.

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Confidential

11th November, 1982.

Dear Margaret,

I was in Israel last week with Bill McLean as guests of the Israeli Foreign Office and to address the Annual Balfour Dinner.

In the course of the visit I had full and frank talks, separately, with the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Director General of the Foreign Office, the head of the Mossad, two leaders of the Labour Party (Mr. Peres and Mr. Eban), and General Ezer Weizmann, the former Minister of Defence. We also had talks with the acting head of the West Bank civilian administration, the Mayor of Jerusalem and the Chairman of the Arab "Village League" which cooperates with the Israelis. I have not thought it worth bothering you with a separate note on each of these conversations particularly as they all covered much the same ground. Instead I attach an account of the principal impressions which Bill McLean and I formed at the end of our stay.

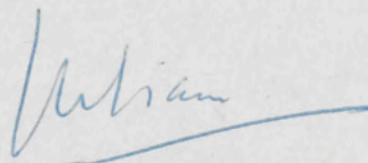
Both of us were mainly concerned with listening to Israeli views; but in my speech at the Balfour Dinner and in all our conversations I went out of my way to urge the importance of the Reagan proposals and the need to give them the most serious consideration.

It may be wishful thinking on my part, but I have a slight feeling that Mr. Begin may not be quite as inflexible<sup>as he seems</sup> and may realise that a deal with King Hussein, if he can get one, would by virtue of Israel's military, technical and financial superiority, go a long way to extending Israeli influence into the Arab world. Moreover, if King Hussein can get the necessary Arab support to offer to negotiate it would, I think, be very difficult, as well as very unwise, for Mr. Begin to refuse.

2.  
Passage deleted and retained under  
Section 3(4). *Wayland, 7 May 2013*

I am copying this correspondence to Francis Pym and  
John Nott.

*gr am,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julian". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Julian Amery

The Rt.Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP

Report of a visit to Israel by the Rt.Hon. Julian Amery, M.P.  
2nd - 7th November, 1982

I. The Consequences of Beirut

Seen from Jerusalem the outcome of the Israeli campaign in Lebanon looks distinctly favourable.

Egypt

Egypt stood by its Treaty with Israel. Mubarak naturally took the opportunity to strengthen his links with other Arab countries but did nothing practical to hinder Israeli operations or to encourage the PLO. This has convinced the Israelis that they were right to withdraw from Sinai in return for peace with Egypt. They recognise that Egypt faces great difficulties economically but feel that peace between the two countries has stood up to the test of a war between Israel and other Arabs and is therefore secure.

Syria

The Syrian armed forces, the only ones to intervene against Israel, took a tremendous beating on the ground and in the air. U.S. (and Israeli) weapons were probably superior to Syria's Soviet equipment. Certainly they were much better handled. Syrian losses have probably been made good by the Soviets but the Israelis believe that the Syrians will withdraw from Lebanon rather than risk another confrontation. The Israelis say that for their part they have no intention of withdrawing unless the Syrians do so and the remnants of the PLO as well. The PLO forces in the Bekaa are entirely dependent on the Syrians for their infrastructure. If the Syrians go, they will have to go. The PLO forces around Tripoli have some local support and might try to hang on.

The PLO

As a military force the PLO is seen as virtually destroyed, its arsenal of weapons has been captured. Most of its fighting units have been dispersed to several countries where they are likely to be kept under tight control by their host governments. Much the same is true of its political leadership. Without Beirut it cannot exist as the State within a State which it previously was

with its own schools, law courts, hospitals and tax gathering officials. Its different factional leaders will come more than ever under the control of their different patrons - Iraq, Syria, Saudi etc. - who will use them for their own rather than for Palestinian purposes. Even in relatively liberal Tunisia, Arafat cannot hope to enjoy the same freedom he had in Beirut. One result of all this will be that the PLO will lose much of their ability to blackmail or cajole other Arab governments.

*Passage deleted and retained under  
Section 3(4) O'Wayland, 7 May 2013*

No doubt some sections of the PLO will continue terrorist activities but this option is scarcely open to Arafat if he continues to project himself as a moderate.

#### The Lebanon

The Israelis had set great store by their relationship with Beshir Gemayel as the strong man among the Maronites, as their friend, and as perhaps the only man capable of again forming an effective Lebanese state. They had hoped to conclude a peace treaty with him, though they recognise that they tried to press for this too quickly. They are much less sure of Amin's friendship or of his effectiveness. Nevertheless, the Phalangists remain Amin's power base and his father's influence (Pierre Gemayel) should be beneficial from the Israeli point of view. They are thus reasonably confident of arriving at a working agreement with Amin and at least of ensuring that Lebanon is denied to a potential enemy.

#### General

In the context of Arab/Israeli relations generally, the Lebanon campaign is seen as a turning point in two respects. First it confirms Israel's invincibility. Second it confirms the overwhelming superiority of American over Soviet influence in the area.

## II. The Reagan Plan

The events which have strengthened the state of Israel have also accentuated the divisions between Israelis. They no longer feel threatened as in the past. Instead they feel free to indulge their natural talent for political infighting. Criticism of the conduct of the war and the enquiry into the killings in the camps, are the superficial expression of this. But the underlying issue is the future of the West Bank and Gaza. Even here there is a virtual identity between the Government and the Opposition on certain key points. The chief of these are the determination a) to keep Jerusalem as their undivided capital, b) to extend their territory so that Tel Aviv can no longer be within range of medium artillery and c) to establish some Israeli settlements on the West Bank.

The main difference arises over what to do about the bulk of the occupied territories and the 1½ million Arabs who inhabit it.

The Government view is that the Arab population are Jordanian citizens free to live and work in the Occupied Territories, in Jordan, and in Israel as indeed they do. They can have their own municipal and village government and their own law courts but for security reasons the overall administration of the occupied territories must remain with the Israeli dominated civilian administration until the end of the period of autonomy. No decision was reached at Camp David as to what would happen after the 5 years of autonomy. The Egyptian negotiators thought self-determination should be the goal. The Israeli Government reserved their right to claim the "return of Judea, Samaria and Gaza".

The Opposition view is that the State of Israel cannot afford to have a minority of some 2 million Arabs, (1½ million in the occupied territories, plus ½ million already citizens of the state). This number is too large to digest or to expel. Nor could Israeli democratic traditions allow them to be permanently treated as second class citizens. They would therefore like to see them hived off so long as they were not hived off to become a PLO state.

They have therefore always hankered after a deal with Jordan. Hitherto King Hussein has been less than enthusiastic about the kind of terms he was likely to get from any Israeli Government. The Opposition hope, however, that now that the PLO has been cut down to size, he may be readier to take half a loaf.

It is against this background that Government and Opposition are considering the Reagan proposals. Mr. Begin sees merit in some parts of the proposals notably the statement that the US "would not support a Palestinian state". He argues however, that even if King Hussein could get a mandate from the Arab States for the Reagan plan, the Palestinians and, therefore quite likely the PLO, would end up by dismantling the Hashemite monarchy and confronting Israel with a dangerous neighbour. He recognises however that the monarchy proved very successful in dealing with the PLO in 1970 and that King Hussein ranks as the outstanding survivor in the Middle East. The furthest Mr. Begin has so far been prepared to go to meet President Reagan is to offer talks with King Hussein without conditions but in the framework of Camp David. Mr. Shamir repeated this explicitly too. This could mean that there is rather more flexibility in the official Israeli position than has so far appeared.

The Opposition leaders on the other hand welcome the President's proposal as a realistic basis for negotiation with King Hussein over the future of the occupied territories. But they see hard bargaining ahead - if negotiations begin at all - on the delimitation of the frontier, on the future of the settlements already established in the occupied territories, and over Jerusalem.

Both parties, however, still do not know whether King Hussein will receive the necessary mandate from other Arab states (or from the PLO) to undertake negotiations with Israel. To that extent the debate between them and the Reagan proposals themselves are still academic. This of course favours the Government. They are in office and in possession of the West Bank. The autonomy provided for under Camp David which is part of the President's proposal still has 5 years to run; and much can happen in five years.

On the other hand if King Hussein can muster sufficient support to offer to negotiate many Israelis believe that it would be very difficult for Mr. Begin to refuse.