

ADVANCE COPY

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CONFIDENTIAL
FM WASHINGTON
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 1712
OF 202230Z JULY 90
INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW, PARIS, PEKING, UKMIS NEW YORK
INFO PRIORITY MIDDLE EAST POSTS, ACTOR

UKMIS TELNOS 851 AND 863: THE PERMANENT FIVE AND THE MIDDLE EAST

SUMMARY

1. ADMINISTRATION CAN ACQUIESCE IN DISCUSSION OF ARAB/ISRAEL BY THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE PERMANENT FIVE PROVIDED THAT IT DOES NOT BECOME INSTITUTIONALISED OR FOCUS TOO CLOSELY ON DETAILS OF THE PEACE PROCESS. BUT THEIR LONGER TERM ATTITUDE WILL DEPEND ON THE FATE OF THE BAKER INITIATIVE.

DETAIL

2. WE HAVE SPOKEN TO KURTZER (DAS/NEA, STATE DEPARTMENT) ABOUT THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL'S SUGGESTION OF MEETINGS WITH THE PERMANENT FIVE TO REVIEW THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST.
3. KURTZER SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S CURRENT OBJECTIVE REMAINED TO INITIATE AN ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN DIALOGUE. THEY BELIEVED THAT THERE WAS STILL A CHANCE OF MAKING PROGRESS ON THE BAKER INITIATIVE. (THEY HOPED LEVY WOULD VISIT WASHINGTON ON 9/10 AUGUST - SEE MIFT, NOT TO ALL) THEY THEREFORE DID NOT WANT AN ALTERNATIVE FORUM TO EMERGE WHICH DISTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF THE PARTIES FROM THE PROCESS IN HAND. IN THE LIGHT OF THIS, KURTZER THOUGHT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD NOT OBJECT TO MEETINGS BETWEEN THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE PERMANENT FIVE TO DISCUSS THE MIDDLE EAST SO LONG AS NO PARTY PRESSED FOR THIS TO BECOME A REGULAR AND INSTITUTIONALISED FORUM FOR DISCUSSION OF THE PEACE PROCESS. HE ADDED THAT THE MORE THAT THESE MEETINGS COULD ADDRESS THE BROADER SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST RATHER THAN TACTICS FOR THE PEACE PROCESS THE MORE COMFORTABLE THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE WITH THEM.
4. ON THE SPECIFICS, KURTZER SAID THAT ANY SUGGESTION THAT THERE WAS AN ALTERNATIVE TRACK FOR AN ARAB/ISRAEL PEACE PROCESS WOULD REDUCE THE CHANCES OF THE PARTIES AGREEING TO ENTER A DIALOGUE. THE PALESTINIANS WOULD APPLAUD INVOLVEMENT BY THE PERMANENT FIVE, SEEING IT AS THE FIRST STEP ALONG THE ROAD TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, AND WOULD BE LESS INCLINED TO MAKE

THE DIFFICULT CHOICES INVOLVED IN OPENING A DIALOGUE. THE ISRAELIS, ON THE OTHER HAND, WOULD BE DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE PERMANENT FIVE.

5. WE SUGGESTED THAT THIS MIGHT BE JUST THE PRESSURE NEEDED TO GET THE ISRAELIS TO DROP THEIR OBJECTIONS TO A DIALOGUE. KURTZER SAID THAT THIS WAS A MATTER OF JUDGEMENT, BUT IN HIS VIEW IT WOULD ONLY MAKE THE ISRAELIS MORE CAUTIOUS ABOUT ENTERING ANY PROCESS.

6. KURTZER ADDED THAT, IF BAKER WERE TO GET A POSITIVE ANSWER FROM LEVY, THEN THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE EVEN MORE ANXIOUS TO AVOID THE DISTRACTION OF AN ALTERNATIVE FOCUS OF ACTIVITY. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, LEVY SAID NO, THEN THE SITUATION WOULD MOVE ON: THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE LOOKING AROUND AT OTHER MEANS OF STAYING ENGAGED. THIS WOULD OBVIOUSLY INCLUDE TAKING A FRESH LOOK AT THE VALUE OF INVOLVEMENT OF THE PERMANENT FIVE.

COMMENT

7. THE ADMINISTRATION'S CURRENT STANCE IS INEVITABLY AFFECTED BY UNCERTAINTY OVER THE FUTURE OF THE BAKER INITIATIVE. THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S GAME PLAN, AS DESCRIBED IN SECOND TUR, OF ENTICING THEM GENTLY SEEMS JUST ABOUT RIGHT. INDEED, KURTZER REMARKED THAT NOTHING THAT THE SECRETARY-GENERAL HAD SAID IN WASHINGTON THIS WEEK HAD MADE THE ADMINISTRATION UNCOMFORTABLE.

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