

LDW 041/21

VLDX 002

FDW G 093/20

CYPHER

00 TOKYO

IMMEDIATE

GR 1100

CONFIDENTIAL

FM FCO 201420Z SEP 82

TO IMMEDIATE TOKYO (FOR PMS PARTY)

TELNO 424 OF 20 SEP

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM NOW REPEATED TO YOU AT REQUEST OF DEPT WAS RECEIVED FROM TEL AVIV TELNO 381 OF 20 SEP INFO IMMEDIATE UKREP BRUSSELS, PRIORITY BEIRUT, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, AMMAN, DAMASCUS, CAIRO AND JERUSALEM.

MASSACRE OF PALESTINIANS

1. REACTIONS HERE TO THE APPALLING EVENTS IN BEIRUT HAVE BEEN SLOWED BY THE TWO DAY JEWISH NEW YEAR HOLIDAY WHICH ENDED LAST NIGHT, DURING WHICH THERE WERE NO NEWSPAPERS AND ACTIVITY WAS AT A MINIMUM. BUT IT IS ALREADY CLEAR THAT THE MASSACRE OF PALESTINIANS WILL DEEPLY AFFECT ISRAEL'S ROLE IN LEBANON, RELATIONS WITH WASHINGTON AND THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE.

2. TO JUDGE FROM THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AFTER LAST NIGHT'S CABINET MEETING, IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THE GOVERNMENT INTEND TO BRAZEN MATTERS OUT. IT WOULD THROW THEIR WHOLE STRATEGY IN LEBANON INTO DOUBTS IF THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT A MISTAKE HAD BEEN MADE ABOUT DEPLOYMENT OF ISRAELI FORCES INTO WEST BEIRUT. THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE IDF HAS ATTEMPTED TO SHUFFLE OFF BLAME FOR THE MASSACRE ON TO THE LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER AND MORRIS DRAPER, ARGUING THAT THEY HAD BLOCKED DIRECT COORDINATION BETWEEN THE ISRAELI AND LEBANESE ARMIES: HAD THERE BEEN DIRECT CONTACT, THE LEBANESE ARMY WOULD HAVE ENTERED THE CAMPS IN QUESTION AND THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO PROBLEM. EITAN EMPHASISED THAT THE IDF COULD NOT GIVE ORDERS TO THE PHALANGISTS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY, AND THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD INTERVENED AS SOON AS THEY REALISED WHAT WAS HAPPENING. OTHER IDF SOURCEK

HAT THEIR INTERVENTION LED TO FIGHTING WITH CHRISTIAN MILITIA IN WHICH AT LEAST ONE MILITIA MAN WAS KILLED.

3. THE MASSACRE HAS BROUGHT A FIERCE REACTION FROM THE LABOUR ALIGNMENT OPPOSITION AND IN THE MORNING PRESS. WHILE REJECTING ANY SUGGESTION THAT THE IDF WAS INVOLVED, THE ALIGNMENT YESTERDAY CALLED FOR BEGIN AND SHARON TO RESIGN, FOR A SPECIALLY CONVENED SESSION OF THE KNESSET, AND FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JUDICIAL COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY. THEY ALSO URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO WITHDRAW FROM BEIRUT AND TO REFRAIN FROM DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTERVENTION IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF LEBANON.

4. THE SERIOUS MORNING PAPERS CARRY SHARPLY WORDED EDITORIALS REFERRING TO THE SHAME OR STAIN OF BEIRUT AND CALLING FOR RESIGNATIONS: DAVAR EDITOR INSISTS THAT THE ENTIRE GOVERNMENT SHOULD RESIGN SEMICOLON HAARETZ CALLS FOR AT LEAST SHARON AND THE CHIEF OF STAFF TO RESIGN SEMICOLON AND THE JERUSALEM POST, IN A FIERCE EDITORIAL ARGUING THAT NEITHER THE ARMY NOR THE GOVERNMENT CAN ABSOLVE THEMSELVES FROM BLAME BY PLEADING IGNORANCE OR REPROACHING OTHERS FOR THE MORAL RESPONSIBILITY OF "THIS DISASTROUS FAILURE OF JUDGEMENT", CALLS FOR THE RESIGNATION OF BEGIN, SHARON, AND THE CHIEF OF STAFF. ALL THREE PAPERS HOWEVER ARE HABITUAL CRITICS OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE MORE POPULAR AFTERNOON PAPERS ARE LESS OUTSPOKEN BUT NONETHELESS CRITICAL OF THE DECISION TO MOVE INTO WEST BEIRUT.

5. IT IS TOO SOON TO ASSESS THE FULL IMPLICATIONS. THOSE IN ISRAEL WHO WERE ALREADY DOUBTFUL ABOUT GETTING DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO LEBANON WILL HAVE HAD THEIR DOUBTS STRONGLY REINFORCED. MANY OF THOSE WHO HAVE HITHERTO SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE BEEN PROFOUNDLY SHAKEN. ONE OR TWO RELATIVE DOVES WITHIN THE CABINET MAY EVEN RESIGN. THE MASSACRE WILL CERTAINLY GIVE NEW EMPHASIS TO THE DEBATE ABOUT THE MORALITY OF ISRAELI POLICY (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON IDF MORALE, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE EMPHASIS HERE ON THE CONCEPT OF PURITY OF ARMS). BUT I DOUBT WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WILL RESIGN OR THERE WILL BE ANY QUICK MOVE TO NEW ELECTIONS.

6. WHOEVER ACTUALLY PERPETRATED THE MASSACRE, THE ONUS IS ON THE ISRAELIS TO EXPLAIN HOW THEY GOT INTO THIS MESS, ESPECIALLY SINCE THEY CLAIMED THAT THE IDF MOVED INTO WEST BEIRUT TO HOLD THE RING. I BELIEVE THAT THEY WERE TANTALISED BY THE PROSPECT OF STAY-BEHIND PLO STILL BEING AT LARGE IN BEIRUT AND COULD NOT RESIST SEIZING THE CHANCE TO ROUND UP THE LAST OF THEM AND THEIR ALLIES. CHRISTIAN MILITIA WERE ALMOST CERTAINLY USED FOR TWO REASONS: FIRST TO KEEP DOWN IDF CASUALTIES, AND SECONDLY TO AVOID FURTHER ACCUSATIONS THAT ISRAEL WAS TAKING MATTERS INTO ITS OWN HANDS. I SUSPECT THAT IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN CLEAR TO THE IDF UNTIL TOO LATE THAT THE FIRING WITHIN THE CAMPS WAS NOT THE CLEANSING OF PLO WHICH THEY WERE EXPECTING. BUT IDF STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN INCONSISTANT.

7. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, THE GOVERNMENT HAD INTELLIGENCE REPORTS BEFOREHAND THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO DISARM THE PALESTINIAN AND LEFTIST GROUPS IN BEIRUT WITHOUT TAKING STEPS TO PROTECT THEM WOULD EXPOSE SUCH PEOPLE TO THE WRATH OF THE CHRISTIANS, AND THAT IT WOULD BE DISASTROUS TO ALLOW CHRISTIAN LEBANESE FORCES, AS OPPOSED TO THE LEBANESE ARMY, TO ENTER THE REFUGEE CAMPS. EVIDENTLY SUCH WARNINGS WERE NOT HEEDED OR RATHER WERE GIVEN INSUFFICIENT WEIGHT.

8. NONE OF THIS ABSOLVES THE ISRAELIS FROM INDIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT HAPPENED. THEY HAVE NO DOUBT BEEN GUILTY OF INCOMPETENCE, MISCALCULATION, OVER EAGERNESS TO CLEAR OUT REMAINING PLO, AND UNWISE DEPENDENCE ON UNDISCIPLINED MILITIA. NEVERTHELESS, I WOULD MYSELF EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE KILLINGS. I EQUALLY DOUBT WHETHER THEY DELIBERATELY ALLOWED THEIR LEBANESE PARTNERS A FREE HAND IN A MASSACRE OF CIVILIANS SO OBVIOUSLY AGAINST THE INTERESTS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS EXTERNAL IMAGE.

9. ONE IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF THE TRAGEDY MAY BE TO ACCELERATE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM BEIRUT, IF NOT FROM THE REST OF LEBANON. IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER ANOTHER MAY BE TO MAKE THEM MORE CO-OPERATIVE ABOUT THE DEPLOYMENT OF UNIFIL FORCES TO BEIRUT (UKMIS NEW YORK TELNO 1412) BUT THE SIGNS ARE NOT PROMISING.

10. I HOPE THAT IN OUR OWN PUBLIC STATEMENTS WE SHALL BE CAREFUL TO CONDEMN NOT ONLY THE ISRAELIS BUT ALSO THE LEBANESE MILITIA WHO APPEAR TO HAVE ACTUALLY CARRIED OUT THE MASSACRE. THERE ARE ALREADY REFERENCES IN THE MEDIA HERE TO HYPOCRISY ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO SEEK TO PIN SOLE BLAME FOR IT ON ISRAEL. THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT WILL BE QUICK TO EXPLOIT ANY OPENING THEY ARE GIVEN TO CHANNEL PUBLIC INDIGNATION INTO THIS SIDE STREET.

LDW 602

TO PP TOKYO

GROUPS 100 , APPROX

FM CENTROFORM LONDON 19 1830

UNCLASSIFIED

RETRACT 00519SEPT

LATE ITEM ONE.

SUNDAY

19TH SEPTEMBER 1982.

PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON LEBANON KILLINGS.

IN A BRIEF STATEMENT DURING HER VISIT TO JAPAN TODAY (19 SEPTEMBER) BRITISH PRIME MINISTER MARGARET THATCHER REFERRED TO REPORTS OF MASSACRE OF HUNDREDS OF MEN WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN PALESTINE REFUGEE CAMPS IN BEIRUT. "WE AWAIT MORE FACTS," SHE SAID, " BUT WE HAVE NOTED THE STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS THAT THE DEATHS MAY BE NUMBERED IN THOUSANDS. I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT IT UNBELIEVABLE IF IT HAD NOT HAPPENED. I AM APPALLED BY THIS ACT OF SHEER BARBARISM WHICH MUST BRING TOTAL CONDEMNATION ON ITS PERPETRATORS."

ENDS LATE ITEM ONE. L P S

CENTROFORM LONDON

NNNN

Middle E

WDL 20.
9

01.0



EMBASSY OF ISRAEL
2 PALACE GREEN
LONDON W8 4QB
Telephone: 01-937 8050

שגרירות ישראל
לונדון

Handwritten notes in blue ink: "102 1/2" and "6-a."

Extracts from the Report of the
Judicial Commission of Inquiry

The recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry were already reported in the media. The following extracts from its Report illuminate some additional aspects of its findings.

1) Israeli intentions

Contentions and accusations were advanced that even if I.D.F. personnel had not shed the blood of the massacred, the entry of Phalangists into the camps had been carried out with the prior knowledge that a massacre would be perpetrated there and with the intention that this should indeed take place, and therefore all those who had enabled the entry of the Phalangists into the camps should be regarded as accomplices to the acts of slaughter and sharing in direct responsibility. These accusations too are unfounded. We have no doubt that no conspiracy or plot was entered into between anyone from the Israeli political echelon or from the military echelon in the IDF and the Phalangists, with the aim of perpetrating atrocities in the camps. The decision to have the Phalangists enter the camps was taken with the aim of preventing further losses in the war in Lebanon, to accede to the pressure of public opinion in Israel, which was angry that the Phalangists, who were reaping the fruits of the war, were taking no part in it, and to take advantage of the Phalangists' professional service and their skills in identifying terrorists and in discovering arms caches. No intention existed on the part of any Israeli element to harm the non-combatant population in the camps. It is true that in the war in Lebanon, and particularly during the siege of West Beirut, the civilian population sustained losses, with old people, women and children among the casualties, but this was the result of belligerent actions which claim victims even among those who do not fight. Before they entered the camps and also afterwards, the Phalangists requested I.D.F. support in the form of artillery fire and tanks, but this request was rejected by the Chief of Staff in order to prevent injuries to civilians. It is true that IDF tank fire was directed at sources of fire within the camps, but this was in reaction to fire directed at the IDF from inside

/cont...

the camps. We assert that in having the Phalangists enter the camps, no intention existed on the part of anyone who acted on behalf of Israel to harm the non-combatant population, and that the events that followed did not have the concurrence or assent of anyone from the political or civilian echelon who was active regarding the Phalangists' entry into the camps.

2) Could Israelis see or hear what happened in the camps?

It was alleged that the atrocities being perpetrated in the camps were visible from the roof of the Forward Command Post, that the fact that they were being committed was also discernible from the sounds emanating from the camps, and that the senior I.D.F. commanders who were on the roof of the Forward Command Post for two days certainly saw or heard what was going on in the camps. We have already determined above that events in the camps, in the area where the Phalangists entered, were not visible from the roof of the Forward Command Post. It has also been made clear that no sounds from which it could be inferred that a massacre was being perpetrated in the camps reached that place. It is true that certain reports did reach officers at the Forward Command Post - and we shall discuss these in another section of this Report - but from the roof of the Forward Command Post they neither saw the actions of the Phalangists nor heard any sounds indicating that a massacre was in progress.

Here we must add that when the group of doctors and nurses met I.D.F. officers on Saturday morning, at a time when it was already clear to them that they were out of danger, they made no complaint that a massacre had been perpetrated in the camps. When we asked the witnesses from this group why they had not informed the I.D.F. officers about the massacre, they replied that they had not known about it. The fact that the doctors and nurses who were in the Gaza Hospital - which is proximate to the site of the event and where persons wounded in combative action and frightened persons from the camps arrived - did not know about the massacre, but only about isolated instances of injury which they had seen for themselves, also shows that those who were nearby but not actually inside the camps did not form the impression, from what they saw and heard, that a massacre of hundreds of people was taking place. Nor did members of a unit of the Lebanese Army who were

/cont...

stationed near the places of entry into the camps know anything about the massacre until after the Phalangists had departed.

3) Direct responsibility

Our conclusion is therefore that the direct responsibility for the perpetration of the acts of slaughter rests on the Phalangist Forces. No evidence was brought before us that Phalangist personnel received explicit orders from their Command to perpetrate acts of slaughter, but it is evident that the forces who entered the area were steeped in hatred for the Palestinians, in the wake of the atrocities and severe injuries done to the Christians during the Civil War in Lebanon by the Palestinians and those who fought alongside them, and these feelings of hatred were compounded by a longing for revenge in the wake of the assassination of the Phalangists' admired leader Bashir and the killing of several dozen Phalangists two days before their entry into the camps. The execution of acts of slaughter was approved for the Phalangists on the site by the remarks of the two commanders to whom questions were addressed over the radios, as was related above.

4) Indirect responsibility of others

We would like to note here that we will not enter at all into the question of indirect responsibility of other elements besides the State of Israel. One might argue that such indirect responsibility falls, inter alia, on the Lebanese Army, or on the Lebanese Government to whose orders this army was subject, since despite Major General Drori's urgings in his talks with the heads of the Lebanese Army, they did not grant Israel's requests to enter the camps before the Phalangists or instead of the Phalangists, until 19.9.82. It should also be noted that in meetings with U.S. Representatives during the critical days, Israel's spokesmen repeatedly requested that the U.S. use its influence to get the Lebanese Army to fulfil the function of maintaining public peace and order in West Beirut, but it does not seem that these requests had any result. One might also make charges concerning the hasty evacuation of the multi-national force by the countries whose troops were in place until after the evacuation of the terrorists. We will also not discuss the question of when other elements besides Israeli elements first learned of the massacre, and whether they did all they could to stop it or at least to immediately bring the reports in their possession to Israeli and other elements.

/cont...

We do not view it as our function to discuss these issues, which perhaps should be clarified in another framework, we will only discuss the issue of Israel's indirect responsibility knowing that if this responsibility is determined, it is not an exclusive responsibility laid on Israel alone.

5) Closing remarks

In the witnesses' testimony and in various documents, stress is laid on the difference between the usual battle ethics of the I.D.F. and the battle ethics of the bloody clashes and combat actions among the various ethnic groups, militias, and fighting forces in Lebanon. The difference is considerable. In the war the I.D.F. waged in Lebanon, many civilians were injured and much loss of life was caused, despite the effort the I.D.F. and its soldiers made not to harm civilians. On more than one occasion, this effort caused I.D.F. troops additional casualties. During the months of the war, I.D.F. soldiers witnessed many sights of killing, destruction and ruin. From their reactions (about which we have heard) to acts of brutality against civilians, it would appear the despite the terrible sights and experiences of the war and despite the soldier's obligation to behave as a fighter with a certain degree of callousness, I.D.F. soldiers did not lose their sensitivity to atrocities that were perpetrated on non-combatants either out of cruelty or to give vent to vengeful feelings. It is regrettable that the reaction by I.D.F. soldiers to such deeds was not always forceful enough to bring a halt to the despicable acts.

It seems to us that the I.D.F. should continue to foster the (consciousness of) basic moral obligations which must be kept even in war conditions, without prejudicing the I.D.F.'s combat ability. The circumstances of combat require the combatants to be tough - which means to give priority to sticking to the objective and being willing to make sacrifices - in order to attain the objectives assigned to them, even under the most difficult conditions. But the end never justifies the means, and basic ethical and human values must be maintained in the use of arms.

Among the responses to the Commission for the public, there were those who expressed dissatisfaction with the holding of an inquiry on a subject not directly related to Israel's responsibility. The argument was advanced that in previous instances of massacre in Lebanon, when the lives of many more people were taken than those of the victims who fell in Sabra

/Cont...

and Shatilla, world opinion was not shocked and no inquiry commissions were established. We cannot justify this approach to the issue of holding an inquiry and not only for the formal reason that it was not we who decided to hold the inquiry but rather the Israeli Government resolved thereon. The main purpose of the inquiry was to bring to light all the important facts relating to the perpetration of the atrocities. It therefore has importance from the perspective of Israel's moral fortitude and its functioning as a democratic state that scrupulously maintains the fundamental principles of the civilized world.

We do not deceive ourselves that the results of this inquiry will convince or satisfy those who have prejudices or selective consciences, but this inquiry was not intended for such people. We have striven and have spared no effort to arrive at the truth, and we hope that all persons of good will who will examine the issue without prejudice will be convinced that the inquiry was conducted without any bias.

9th February 1983