

MIDDLE EAST

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INFO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK, TUNIS, TEL AVIV

INFO PRIORITY ALGIERS, CAIRO, PARIS, RABAT, AMMAN, DAMASCUS, MODUK

MY TELNO 2750: ISRAELI ATTACK ON PLO IN TUNISIA

SUMMARY

1. THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE MODIFIED THEIR PUBLIC LINE.
IT NOW DEPLORES THE ISRAELI RAID, THOUGH STILL STATING THAT
RETALIATION FOR TERRORIST ATTACKS IS LEGITIMATE.

DETAIL

2. COVEY (NSC STAFF) TOLD US TODAY THAT THE ADMINISTRATION NOW INTENDED TO MOVE TO A MORE NUANCE LINE IN PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE ISRAELI RAID. THEIR AIM WOULD BE TO AVOID GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY CONDONED THE RAID, WITHOUT COMPROMISING THEIR POSITION THAT RETALIATION AGAINST THE PERPETRATORS OF TERRORIST ACTS WAS LEGITIMATE. COVEY HOPED THAT THIS REVISED LINE WOULD ALSO SOOTHE THE TUNISIANS WHO HAD BEEN OUTRAGED BY THE VIOLATION OF THEIR SOVEREIGNTY AND DEEPLY UPSET BY YESTERDAY'S WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT.
3. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF TODAY'S WHITE HOUSE PRESS GUIDANCE:

QUOTE

WE FIRST WANT TO EXTEND THE SINCERE CONDOLENCES OF THE USG TO THE GOVERNMENT OF TUNISIA OVER THE LOSS OF LIFE OF ITS CITIZENS IN THE RAID. OUR SYMPATHIES ARE WITH THE PEOPLE OF TUNISIA.

YESTERDAY WE NOTED, AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE REITERATED AT THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL LUNCHEON IN NEW YORK, THAT WE DEEPLY DEPLORE THE RISING PATTERN OF VIOLENCE IN THE REGION INCLUDING THE LATEST INCIDENT OF THE ATTACK ON PLO HEADQUARTERS IN TUNIS.

WHILE RESORT TO VIOLENCE IS DEPLORABLE, IT IS USEFUL TO RECALL THE ANTECEDENTS TO THIS ATTACK, WHICH INCLUDED REPEATED ATTEMPTS TO INFILTRATE TERRORISTS INTO ISRAEL AND

WHILE RESORT TO VIOLENCE IS DEPLORABLE, IT IS USEFUL TO RECALL THE ANTECEDENTS TO THIS ATTACK, WHICH INCLUDED REPEATED ATTEMPTS TO INFILTRATE TERRORISTS INTO ISRAEL AND THE OUTRAGEOUS MURDER OF THREE ISRAELI CIVILIANS AT LARNACA. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, THE AIR STRIKE IS UNDERSTANDABLE AS AN EXPRESSION OF SELF-DEFENSE.

OUR DISTRESS IS ESPECIALLY ACUTE, HOWEVER, SINCE ONE ACT OF VIOLENCE TOUCHES OFF ANOTHER AND A PATTERN OF ESCALATION IS ESTABLISHED. SUCH ACTS OF VIOLENCE ARE CONTRARY TO OUR OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF A PEACEFUL, STABLE MIDDLE EAST, AND CANNOT BE CONDONED.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE ALSO REAFFIRMED THAT WE ARE CLEAR IN OUR OPPOSITION TO ACTS OF VIOLENCE FROM WHATEVER QUARTER THEY COME.

OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE, OUR OPPOSITION TO TERRORISM IS WELL-KNOWN AND UNSWERVING AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST BE ABLE TO DEFEND AGAINST SUCH ACTS. WITHOUT SUCH DEFENSE, THE PRACTITIONERS OF TERRORISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL MOVE CLOSER TO THEIR GOAL OF STOPPING EFFORTS TOWARD PEACE IN THE REGION.

WE MUST NOT ALLOW THIS VIOLENCE TO HARM OR HINDER THE EFFORTS WE AND OTHER PARTIES ARE EXERTING TO BRING PEACE TO THE MIDDLE EAST.

Q: IS THIS ATTACK ON TUNIS QUOTE APPROPRIATE
UNQUOTE

A: I AM NOT GOING TO COMMENT FURTHER ON THIS SPECIFIC ACTION. AS I SAID PREVIOUSLY, HOWEVER, AS A GENERAL PRINCIPLE, WHILE WE DEPLORE RESORT TO VIOLENCE, THOSE WHO PRACTICE TERRORISM CANNOT ASSUME THEY ARE IMMUNE FROM RETALIATION FOR THEIR TERRORIST ACTS.
UNQUOTE

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