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E.O. 12356: DECL:DADR
TAGS: PREL, KPAL, IS, JO
SUBJECT: SENATOR SIMON PROPOSES MEETING OF ISRAELI,
AMERICAN AND JORDANIAN/PALESTINIAN LEGISLATORS TO
ADVANCE PEACE PROCESS.

1. CONFIDENTIAL-ENTIRE TEXT
2. SUMMARY. SENATOR PAUL SIMON PROPOSED DURING HIS VISIT TO ISRAEL AND THE WEST BANK JANUARY 6-9 THAT FOUR LEGISLATORS EACH FROM THE U.S. SENATE, THE KNESSET AND THE JORDANIAN PARLIAMENT MEET SOON TO FIND WAYS TO MOVE JORDAN, ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. SIMON TOLD US THAT PRIME MINISTER PERES ENDORSED HIS PROPOSAL ENTHUSIASTICALLY DURING A MEETING ON JANUARY 6. WEST BANK MEMBER OF THE JORDANIAN PARLIAMENT EDWARD KHAMIS ALSO ACCEPTED THE IDEA BUT SAID THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO CHECK FIRST WITH AMMAN BEFORE PARTICIPATING. SIMON SAID THAT THE MEETING, WHICH WOULD BE HELD ON NEUTRAL GROUND WITH NO PUBLICITY, WOULD FOCUS ON THE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS BLOCKING THE ADVENT OF NEGOTIATIONS RATHER THAN ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES. SIMON ASKED AMBASSADOR CLUVERIUS TO RAISE THE IDEA SOON WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN. END SUMMARY
3. DURING HIS VISIT TO ISRAEL AND THE WEST BANK JANUARY 6-9, SENATOR PAUL SIMON (D-ILLINOIS) PROPOSED TO BOTH THE GOI AND WEST BANKERS THAT FOUR LEGISLATORS EACH FROM ISRAEL, THE U.S. AND JORDAN MEET SOON TO EXPLORE WAYS TO MOVE THE PEACE PROCESS FORWARD TO THE START OF NEGOTIATIONS. SIMON TOLD US THAT HE MENTIONED THE IDEA TO PRIME MINISTER PERES DURING THEIR JANUARY 6 MEETING. PERES, HE SAID, ENDORSED IT ENTHUSIASTICALLY AND PROMISED THAT ISRAELI KNESSET MEMBERS WOULD TAKE PART. AT A CONGEN RECEPTION ON JANUARY 7, SIMON NEXT PROPOSED THE IDEA TO WEST BANK MEMBER OF THE JORDANIAN PARLIAMENT EDWARD KHAMIS WHO ALSO THOUGHT IT A GOOD IDEA AND SAID HE WOULD PARTICIPATE IF AMMAN AGREED.
4. SIMON EXPLAINED THE PROPOSAL AS FOLLOWS. HE WOULD LIKE TO ARRANGE A MEETING ON NEUTRAL GROUND WITH NO PUBLICITY FOR THE LEGISLATORS TO DISCUSS WAYS OF MOVING THE PEACE PROCESS FORWARD TO THE NEGOTIATING STAGE.

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SIMON CAUTIONED THAT HE WOULD NOT WANT THE LEGISLATORS TO ENGAGE IN A DISCUSSION OF SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY BREAK DOWN DUE TO THE OBVIOUS DIVERSITY OF OPINION AMONG AMERICANS, ISRAELIS, JORDANIANS AND PALESTINIANS. HE WOULD LIKE THE MEETING TO FOCUS INSTEAD ON CONCRETE STEPS THAT THE PARTIES MIGHT TAKE IN THE COMING MONTHS TO LEAD TO THE START OF NEGOTIATIONS.

5. SIMON FORESEES THE PARTICIPATION OF FOUR U.S. SENATORS (TWO DEMOCRATS AND TWO REPUBLICANS) INCLUDING, HE HOPES, SENATOR RICHARD LUGAR, FOUR MEMBERS OF THE KNESSET (HE DID NOT SPECIFY A BREAKDOWN IN PARTY AFFILIATION) AND A COMBINED JORDANIAN/PALESTINIAN DELEGATION MADE UP OF TWO WEST BANK MPS, ONE OF WHOM COULD BE KHAMIS, AND TWO EAST BANKERS. IN ORDER FOR IT TO BE AT ALL USEFUL, HE WOULD LIKE TO CONVENE THE MEETING IN THE COMING MONTH OR TWO.

6. THE NEXT STEP, IN SIMON'S VIEW, IS FOR THE IDEA TO BE BROACHED IN JORDAN. HE ASKED AMBASSADOR CLUVERIUS THAT DURING HIS NEXT TRIP TO AMMAN, HE SEEK, ON SIMON'S BEHALF, JORDANIAN APPROVAL FOR JORDANIAN MPS TO TAKE PART. CLUVERIUS NOTED THAT KING HUSSEIN IS OUT OF THE COUNTRY BUT SAID HE WOULD MENTION THE SENATOR'S IDEA IN AMMAN. SENATOR SIMON MAY MENTION IT TO THE JORDANIAN AMBASSADOR UPON HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON NEXT WEEK.
KEENE
END OF MESSAGE

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