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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PBTS, ECIN, KPAL, IS, JO
SUBJECT: ARAB DOCTORS SEE NO CHANGE IN CIVAD CONTROL OF
WEST BANK HEALTH SERVICES.

REF: TEL AVIV 2852

1. CONFIDENTIAL-ENTIRE TEXT

2. WHEN DEFENSE MINISTER RABIN TOLD SENATOR MATHIAS
FEBRUARY 20 (PARA 5, REF) THAT THE GOI HAD RECENTLY
APPOINTED AN ARAB DOCTOR TO HEAD HEALTH SERVICES IN THE
CIVAD, WE BELIEVED IT COULD MARK THE BEGINNING OF
"DEVOLUTION". SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATIONS WITH TWO
WELL-CONNECTED PALESTINIAN PHYSICIANS INDICATE TO US
THAT RABIN MAY HAVE BEEN MISTAKENLY REFERRING TO THE
APPOINTMENT OF AN ARAB TO A SENIOR BUT LOWER POSITION
TRADITIONALLY HELD BY WEST BANKERS, I.E., AS "DIRECTOR",
NOT "CHIEF" OF HEALTH SERVICES.

3. BOTH DR. ISA SALT, DIRECTOR OF RAMALLAH HOSPITAL
AND PRESIDENT OF THE ARAB MEDICAL WELFARE ASSOCIATION
(AMWA) AND DR. AHMED ZUWAITER, DIRECTOR OF THE MOUNT
DAVID CRIPPLED CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, CLAIM THEY HAVE
HEARD NOTHING ABOUT THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ARAB TO THE
TOP JOB IN HEALTH SERVICES. BOTH ARE IN A POSITION TO
KNOW AND WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN CONSULTED BY THE GOI
PRIOR TO AN APPOINTMENT. BOTH, IN FACT, WOULD BE AMONG
THE HANDFUL OF LIKELY CANDIDATES IF THE GOI DECIDED TO
ALLOW A PALESTINIAN TO MANAGE HEALTH SERVICES.

4. DR. SALT EXPLAINED TO US THAT AN ISRAELI PHYSICIAN,
DR. SAFER, IS THE NUMBER ONE MAN IN THE CIVAD HEIRARCHY
AS CHIEF OF HEALTH SERVICES. BELOW HIM ARE TWO
POSITIONS TRADITIONALLY FILLED BY ARABS; DIRECTOR OF

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HOSPITAL SERVICES (DR. MOHAMED SAID KAMEL) AND DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES (DR. SAID SHAHIN). NEITHER SALT I NOR ZUWAITER FORSEE THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ARAB TO REPLACE AN ISRAELI AS CHIEF OF HEALTH SERVICES. ZUWAITER NOTED THAT HE SEES NO SIGN THAT THE GOI'S TIGHT CONTROL OF THE HEALTH SYSTEM IS DIMISHING IN ANY WAY. HE TOLD US THAT DR. SAFER AND HIS ISRAELI COLLEAGUES ARE INVOLVED IN EVEN THE MOST MUNDANE DECISIONS CONCERNING THE DAY-TO-DAY FUNCTIONING OF THE SYSTEM INCLUDING DECIDING WHICH DOCTORS CAN TAKE LEAVE AND WHEN.

5. RABIN MAY HAVE MADE AN HONEST MISTAKE WHEN HE TOLD MATHIAS THAT AN ARAB HAD BEEN APPOINTED IN CHARGE OF HEALTH SERVICES. SHAHIN WAS RECENTLY NAMED TO HIS PRESENT JOB AS DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES AFTER A LONG SEARCH FOR A CANDIDATE WHICH LEFT THE POSITION VACANT FOR NEARLY A YEAR. BUT HE RANKS AS THE NUMBER THREE MAN IN THE HIERARCHY WHICH, IN THE CIVAD SYSTEM, IS A LONG WAY FROM BEING NUMBER ONE.

DRAPER
END OF MESSAGE

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