

Israel

FBIS 135

ISRAEL PREPARED TO EXTEND MANDATE FOR UN FORCE FOR 6 MONTHS

T081950 JERUSALEM DOMESTIC SERVICE IN HEBREW 1900 GMT 8 APR 75 TA

(TEXT) ISRAEL IS PREPARED TO EXTEND THE MANDATE OF THE UN FORCE IN THE BUFFER ZONE WITH EGYPT FOR 6 MONTHS, SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS TOLD CORRESPONDENTS IN JERUSALEM THIS EVENING. THEY SAID THAT THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO EXTEND THE MANDATE FOR ONLY 3 MONTHS IS CONTRARY TO PRECEDENTS AND TO THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT. THE AUTHORITY TO EXTEND THE MANDATE AND DETERMINE ITS DURATION RESTS EXCLUSIVELY WITH THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL, WHICH HAD DECIDED ON THE SETTING UP OF THE UN FORCE AND LATER DECIDED TO EXTEND ITS MANDATE BY 6 MONTHS. THE MANDATE OF THE UN FORCE IN SINAI WILL END ON 24 APRIL.

OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT REMARKS THAT EGYPT HAS IN THE PAST 10 MONTHS REFUSED TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED NATIONS REGARDING THE STATUS OF THE FORCES IN ITS TERRITORY. ISRAEL BEGAN CONTACTS IN THIS REGARD SOME 10 MONTHS AGO.

THE OFFICIALS SAID THAT THE EGYPTIANS ARE BEHAVING IN THIS WAY APPARENTLY TO PREVENT THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE UN FORCE.

REGARDING THE REPATRIATION OF THE BODIES OF 39 IDF SOLDIERS, THE OFFICIALS SAID THAT THIS ACT SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS A GESTURE. EGYPT HAD UNDERTAKEN TO DO THIS IN THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT, BUT, NEVERTHRLESS, FROM TIME TO TIME IN THE PAST YEAR IT HAD MADE NEW DEMANDS AS CONDITIONS FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF ISRAEL'S REQUEST FOR THE RETURN OF THE BODIES. EVEN AFTER ISRAEL HAD RELEASED 92 DETAINEES 11

MONTHS AGO, AND EXPRESSED READINESS TO FULFILL OTHER EGYPTIAN DEMANDS, THE EGYPTIANS DID NOT CONSENT TO RETURN THE BODIES OF THE MISSING SOLDIERS. NOW, WHEN PART OF THE COMMITMENT IN THE AGREEMENT IS CARRIED OUT AFTER A DELAY, IT IS PRESENTED AS A GESTURE.

OUR CORRESPONDENT ADDS THAT AN ADDITIONAL 18 BODIES OF MISSING SOLDIERS REMAIN IN EGYPTIAN TERRITORY.

REGARDING THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ABOUT HIS READINESS TO ALLOW NONSTRATEGIC ISRAELI GOODS TO PASS THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL, THE OFFICIALS SAID THAT THIS CONDITION, TOO, IS CONTRARY TO EGYPT'S COMMITMENT TO ALLOW FREE PASSAGE OF GOOD IN THE CANAL WITHOUT ANY RESTRICTIONS.

OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT SAYS THAT THIS COMMITMENT, TOGETHER WITH THE COMMITMENT REGARDING THE RETURN OF THE BODIES OF THE MISSING SOLDIERS, WAS SIGNED BY BOTH SIDES IN THE DOCUMENT DEPOSITED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS AND NOT MADE PUBLIC.

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