

LS E C R E T/SENSITIVE 160822Z MAY 74

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EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY IMMEDIATE

HAKTO 97

MAY 15, 1974

TO: GENERAL SCOWCROFT

FROM: THE SECRETARY

PLEASE PASS THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT.

BEGIN MESSAGE:

1. THIS HAS BEEN A DIFFICULT DAY FOR THE ISRAELIS WHICH WOUND UP WITH FORCES HAVING TO STORM A SCHOOL ROOM TO KILL THREE TERRORISTS, BUT NOT UNTIL AFTER 20 CHILDREN HAD BEEN KILLED BY THEM AND ABOUT 50 WOUNDED.

2. HOWEVER, DESPITE THIS TRAGIC EVENT, I HAD SEVERAL TALKS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. THE ISRAELI CABINET IS MEETING IN A VERY LATE NIGHT SESSION WITH A VIEW TO MAKING A FURTHER ADJUSTMENT IN THEIR POSITION ON DISENGAGEMENT TO MEET IN A SUBSTANTIAL WAY THE LATEST SYRIAN VIEWS. MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT THE CABINET WILL AGREE TO A NEW ISRAELI DEFENSIVE LINE AROUND QUNEITRA, BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH, WHICH WILL GO CLOSE TO 9/10THS OF THE WAY TO MEETING THE SYRIAN PROPOSALS FOR THIS AREA.

3. YOU WILL RECALL THAT THE LATEST SYRIAN POSITION WAS THAT THE LINE SHOULD BE DRAWN THROUGH THE PEAKS OF THE HILLS WEST OF QUNEITRA. THE ISRAELI LEADERSHIP IS MAKING A MAJOR EFFORT TONIGHT WITHIN THE CABINET TO ALTER THEIR DEFENSIVE LINE SO THAT IT WILL BE DRAWN CLOSE TO THE BASE OF THESE HILLS AND EMBRACING SOME OF THE SMALLER HILLS NORTH OF KUNEITRA.

4. YOU WILL RECALL ALSO FROM MY PREVIOUS MESSAGES THAT IN ASAD'S LATEST PROPOSAL HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE ISRAELIS MAKE SOME FURTHER ADJUSTMENT IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE LINE SO AS TO INCLUDE A NUMBER OF SYRIAN VILLAGES. I DO NOT EXPECT THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE THIS CHANGE, AND I BELIEVE THE REASONS THEY GIVE ARE BOTH LOGICAL AND UNDERSTANDING. THE ISRAELIS HAVE EXPLAINED THAT IF THEY MOVE THE LINE IN THE SOUTH SO AS TO TURN OVER A NUMBER OF THE VILLAGES TO THE SYRIANS, THERE IS GREAT DANGER THAT THESE VILLAGES WILL BECOME POPULATED WITH SAIQA FEDAYEEN. THESE VILLAGES ARE LOCATED ON THE PLAINS CLOSE TO A NUMBER OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS. THIS WOULD BE A MADE-TO-ORDER SITUATION FOR GUARANTEEING TERRORIST INCIDENTS OF THE KIND WHICH WOULD PLACE IN JEOPARDY ANY DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT ACHIEVED.

MORI/CDF  
C03344616

State Dept. review completed

5. I AM ENCOURAGED BY THESE DEVELOPMENTS. I WILL BE MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER MEIR AND HER COLLEAGUES EARLY THURSDAY MORNING TO RECEIVE THE DEFINITIVE VIEWS OF THE CABINET. IF THE ABOVE POSITION IS APPROVED, AS I HOPE, I BELIEVE I WILL BE CARRYING A REASONABLE ISRAELI PROPOSITION TO ASAD AND IT WILL THEN BE UP TO HIM TO SHOW FLEXIBILITY AND COMPROMISE. IF WE CAN ACHIEVE AGREEMENT ON THE LINE, I WOULD HOPE THEN TO MAKE A MAJOR EFFORT TO TRY TO RESOLVE THE REMAINING ISSUES - - ZONES OF LIMITATION, BUFFER ZONE, UN PRESENCE, ETC.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE  
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

6. I WILL BE GOING TO DAMASCUS TOMORROW AFTERNOON AND BE RETURNING TO JERUSALEM TOMORROW NIGHT TO BRING BACK THE SYRIAN RESPONSE.

END MESSAGE.

WARM REGARDS.

BT

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SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

HAKTO 97  
IMMEDIATE  
15 MAY 64 09 22Z

May 15, 1974

TO: GENERAL SCOWCROFT  
FROM: THE SECRETARY

Please pass the following message to the President.

BEGIN MESSAGE:

- ~~Yesterday~~ *This has been*  
1. ~~This has been~~ a difficult day for the Israelis which wound up with forces having to storm a school room to kill three terrorists, but not until after 20 children had been killed by them and about 50 wounded.
2. However, despite this tragic event, I had several talks with the Prime Minister. The Israeli Cabinet ~~is meeting~~ *is meeting* in a very late night session with a view to making a further adjustment in their position on disengagement to meet in a substantial way the latest Syrian views. My understanding is that there is a good chance that the Cabinet will agree to a new Israeli defensive line around Quneitra, both north and south, which will go close to 9/10ths of the way to meeting the Syrian proposals for this area.
3. You will recall that the latest Syrian position was that the line should be drawn through the peaks of the Hills west of Quneitra. The Israeli leadership is making a major effort ~~tonight~~ *tonight* within the Cabinet.

-2-

to alter their defensive line so that it will be drawn close to the base of these hills and embracing some of the smaller hills north of Kuneitra.

4. You will recall also from my previous messages that in Asad's latest proposal he would like to see the Israelis make some further adjustment in the southern part of the line so as to include a number of Syrian villages. I do not expect that the Israelis will be able to make this change, and I believe the reasons they give are both logical and understanding. The Israelis have explained that if they move the line in the south so as to turn over a number of the villages to the Syrians, there is great danger that these villages will become populated with Saiqa fedayeen. These villages are located on the plains close to a number of Israeli settlements. This would be a made-to-order situation for guaranteeing terrorist incidents of the kind which would place in jeopardy any disengagement agreement achieved.

5. I am encouraged by these developments. I will be meeting with Prime Minister Meir and her colleagues ~~early Thursday~~ <sup>early Thursday</sup> ~~today~~ <sup>this</sup> ~~morning~~ <sup>morning</sup> to receive the definitive views of the Cabinet. If the above position is approved, as I hope, I believe I will be carrying a reasonable Israeli proposition to Asad and it will then be up to him to show flexibility and compromise.

-3-

If we can achieve agreement on the line, I would hope then to make a major effort to try to resolve the remaining issues -- zones of limitation, buffer zone, UN presence, etc.

6. I will be going to Damascus ~~tomorrow~~ <sup>this tomorrow</sup> afternoon and be returning to Jerusalem <sup>tomorrow night</sup> ~~tomorrow night~~ to bring back the Syrian response.

END MESSAGE.

Warm regards.

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