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MODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS
TAGS: PFOR EG XF

REF: CAIRO 373

1. SUMMARY

A. SADAT ASKED ME TO REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT AND YOU THAT HIS JUST COMPLETED TRIP TO EIGHT ARAB COUNTRIES HAD GONE WELL. HE HAD EXPLAINED RECENT USG EFFORTS, AND HAD URGED THAT OIL EMBARGO ON US NOW BE LIFTED. ALGERIA READY JOIN EGYPT IN RESUMING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH US WHEN WEST BANK WITHDRAWAL COMPLETED. HOWEVER, BOUMEDIENNE AND FAISAL, WHILE WELCOMING USG EFFORTS, HAD VOICED CONCERN THAT EMBARGO NOT BE LIFTED UNTIL SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT ALSO OBTAINED. (SO HAD ZAYED OF ABUD DHABI.) SADAT IS CONTINUING HIS EFFORTS WITH SAG, AS PROMISED, AND SENDING ASHRAF MARWAN TO SAUDI ARABIA TODAY. HE IS CONFIDENT HE HAS ARRANGEMENT WORKED OUT WITH FAISAL AND WITH SAUDI PRINCES, "BEHIND FAISAL'S BACK" IF HE PROVES TROUBLESOME ON JERUSALEM, TO TREAT US LIKE EUROPE AT 15 PERCENT LEVEL.

B. SYRIANS HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT AND HAD ASKED HIM POSTPONE IMPLEMENTING DISENGAGEMENT. HE HAD DECLINED, BUT INDICATED HE WOULD URGE EFFORT BE MADE ARRANGE SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT--PERHAPS TO QUNAYTRA--IN NEXT FORTY DAYS IF POSSIBLE. WHILE RECOGNIZING YOU AND ASAD HAVE AGREED ON SYRIAN-ISRAELI MILITARY COMMITTEE, SADAT ASKED THAT YOU CONSIDER FOLLOWING ALTERNATIVES OF 1. HAVING ONE OR TWO SYRIAN ARMY OFFICERS JOIN EGYPTIAN MILITARY DELEGATION IN GENEVA AND USE THAT FORUM, OR 2. FAILING THIS, THAT IN WHATEVER FORUM IS USED, EFFORT BE MADE HAVE AT LEAST AN AGREEMENT ON SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT BY END OF FORTY DAYS SO THAT BOTH EGYPTIAN

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AND SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT CAN BE ANNOUNCED SAME TIME. HE MIGHT EVEN BE WILLING ALLOW FEW ISRAELI TROOPS REMAIN ON EAST BANK UNTIL SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT IS REACHED. HE WILL WELCOME YOUR REACTIONS.

C. ON SEPARATE MATTER, HE HAD ALSO ARRANGED WITH BOTH ARAFAT AND KING HASSAN TO SET UP MEETING WITH ARAFAT IN MOROCCO AT ANY TIME YOU WISH.

D. ALL FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS WILL HENCEFORTH BE HANDLED BY FAHMY, AND HAFEZ ISMAIL IS OUT OF THIS SPHERE OF ACTIVITY.

2. GENERAL. AFTER MY MEETING WITH MRS. SADAT TODAY, THE PRESIDENT CAME IN AND HE AND I TALKED ALONE FOR AN HOUR. HE LOOKED TIRED FROM HIS TRIP AND ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT HAD BEEN ARDUOUS. (HE HATES FLYING.) HE SAID THAT HE HAD WANTED TO EMULATE YOU ON THIS TRIP, BUT HAD TO ADMIT HE LACKED YOUR RESILIENCE. HE NOW WANTED TO SUPPLEMENT HIS WRITTEN REPORT OF LAST NIGHT (REFTEL) WITH SOME FURTHER COMMENTS AND IDEAS TO THE PRESIDENT AND TO YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT HIS MESSAGE OF LAST NIGHT HAD IMMEDIATELY BEEN SENT TO YOU, AND REFERRED TO HIS GENUINE APPRECIATION TO HAVE HAD YOUR MESSAGE WRITTEN ON THE PLAN BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND ISRAEL (SECTO 137). IT HAD BEEN MOST HELPFUL TO HIM. THIS WAS THE WAY THAT WE OUGHT TO CONDUCT OUR EXCHANGES IN THE INTEREST OF SPEEDILY ACHIEVING OUR OBJECTIVES. SPEAKING FROM MEMORY, SADAT THEM WENT INTO A SOMEWHAT DIFFUSE DISCUSSION OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF HIS TRIP. THESE ARE REPORTED BELOW UNDER APPROPRIATE SUBJECT HEADINGS.

3. SYRIA. SYRIA WAS FOREMOST ON HIS MIND AND HE KEPT COMING BACK TO IT. IN DAMASCUS, HE EXPLAINED, HE HAD QUITE A "ROW" WITH SYRIAN LEADERSHIP, BUT HE THOUGHT IT HAD COME OUT ALL RIGHT. HE HAD HELD A THREE HOUR MEETING WITH ASAD AND THE SYRIAN LEADERSHIP FOLLOWED BY A SUBSEQUENT PRIVATE MEETING WITH ASAD. THE SYRIANS HAD TAXED HIM SEVERELY FOR HAVING ACCEPTED THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT, CONTENDING IT WILL RELEASE ISRAELI FORCES FOR USE ON THE SYRIAN FRONT. THEY HAD IN FACT ASKED HIM TO POSTPOSE IMPLEMENTATION OF DISENGAGEMENT. HE HAD GIVEN THEM TIT FOR TAT AND REMINDED THEM THAT IT WAS THE SYRIANS' OWN FAULT THAT THEY HAD NO DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT

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AT THIS TIME. HE HAD RECALLED HIS EARLIER INVITATIONS TO THE SYRIANS TO PARTICIPATE IN KILOMETER 101 TALKS, GENEVA CONFERENCE AND OTHER FORUMS IN WHICH THEIR DISENGAGEMENT DESIRES COULD BE DISCUSSED. THEY HAD CONSISTENTLY REFUSED. THEY HAD NO REASON THEREFORE NOW TO COMPLAIN. HE HAD REFUSED THE SYRIAN POSTPONEMENT REQUEST, NOTING HE HAD GIVEN HIS WORD AND WOULD NOT GO BACK ON IT. HE HAD ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE STILL 40 DAYS BEFORE DISENGAGEMENT WOULD BE COMPLETED, WHICH WAS ADEQUATE TIME FOR THE SYRIANS TO GET DISENGAGEMENT TALKS UNDERWAY.

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4. ASAD, HE CONTINUED, STILL HAS A DOMESTIC PROBLEM. SADAT WAS CONVINCED, NEVERTHELESS, THAT ASAD IS INTERESTED IN ARRANGING A DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT. HE HAD IN FACT MADE THE PROPOSAL TO ASAD THAT HE HAD AGREED UPON WITH YOU AND HAD TOLD ASAD NEGOTIATIONS COULD BEGIN WITHOUT DELAY. IN THIS CONNECTION, SADAT SAID HE WAS AWARE THAT ASAD HAD AGREED WITH YOU TO HAVE SYRIAN-ISRAELI MILITARY COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED TO DISCUSS DISENGAGEMENT. SADAT ASKED ME TO PUT TO THE PRESIDENT AND TO YOU, HOWEVER, TWO PROCEDURAL ALTERNATIVES WHICH HE WILL APPRECIATE YOUR CONSIDERING AND GIVING HIM SOONEST YOUR REACTIONS. HIS FIRST PREFERENCE, IF YOU AGREE, WOULD BE TO HAVE THE SYRIANS ATTACK ONE OR TWO OFFICES TO THE EGYPTIAN MILITARY DELEGATION AT GENEVA AND TO CONDUCT SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT TALKS IN THAT FORUM. IF THIS IS NOT FEASIBLE, IN YOUR VIEW, SADAT SUGGESTED THAT, AS AN ALTERNATIVE, AN EFFORT BE MADE IN WHATEVER FORUM IS USED TO AT LEAST REACH AGREEMENT ON SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT IN THE UPCOMING 40-DAY PERIOD. ASAD HAD IN FACT GONE SO FAR AS TO SUGGEST TO SADAT THAT SOME ISRAELI TROOPS BE LEFT ON BOTH THE WEST AND EAST BANKS UNTIL SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT IS OBTAINED, AND NOT TO DECLARE PUBLICLY THAT DISENGAGEMENT HAS BEEN COMPLETED UNTIL AGREEMENT ON SYRIAN HAS ALSO BEEN REACHED. WHILE HE HAD REJECTED ANY IDEA OF ISRAELI TROOPS REMAINING ON THE WEST BANK, SADAT IMPLIED (BUT DID NOT SPECIFICALLY STATE) THAT THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING TO BE SAID FOR KEEPING SOME ISRAELI TROOPS ON THE EAST BANK IF A SYRIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT CAN BE NEGOTIATED DURING THESE 40 DAYS. HE NOTED THAT ASAD'S REQUEST WAS A DEVICE TO TRY TO SAVE HIS POSITION BEFORE THE SYRIAN LEADERSHIP AND ARMY. SADAT SAID THAT, IN HIS VIEW, SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT SHOULD NOT BE A MAJOR PROBLEM. IF QUNAYTRA WERE RETURNED TO THE SYRIANS, THIS SHOULD SUFFICE. HE REITERATED THAT HE BELIEVES ASAD IS ABLE TO NEGOTIATE A DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT AND ASSERTED HE WILL HELP ASAD TO DO SO.

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5. SADAT POINTED OUT THAT HANDLING THE SYRIAN PROBLEM IN THE EGYPTIAN MILITARY COMMITTEE IN GENEVA WILL GIVE EGYPT AND THE US A BIT OF "BREATHING TIME." THESE TALKS SHOULD BE IN A MILITARY, NOT A POLITICAL, CONTEXT. HE SPECIFICALLY ASKED THAT I ASSURE YOU THAT THERE IS NO CHANGE IN THE IDEA HE AND YOU HAD DISCUSSED THAT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE SHOULD NOT FORMALLY RECONVENE UNTIL MARCH. HE HAD, IN FACT, INSTRUCTED ISMAIL XARMY IN MOSCOW TO MAKE THIS CLEAR TO THE SOVIETS BUT HAS NO WORD AS YET AS TO BREZHNEV'S RESPONSE. SADAT REITERATED SEVERAL TIMES, "I NEED A BREATHING SPACE."

6. ISRAELI POW'S IN SYRIA. REFERRING TO THE ISRAELI DEMAND FOR LIST OF ISRAELI POW'S HELD BY SYRIANS, SADAT SAID ASAD HAD TOLD HIM THAT BREZHNEV REQUESTED SUCH A LIST FOLLOWING A TELEPHONE TALK WITH PRESIDENT NIXON. ASAD WAS PREPARED TO DELIVER THAT LIST TO BREZHNEV. SADAT HAD STRONGLY CAUTIONED HIM THAT SUCH A STRATEGY WAS IN ERROR. HE HAD RECALLED THE EARLIER SYRIAN REFUSAL TO GIVE IT EITHER TO HIM OR TO GENERAL AHMED ISMAIL, CHIEF OF THE JOINT EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN FORCES, OR TO YOU. IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE, HE HAD TOLD ASAD, TO GIVE THE LIST DIRECTLY TO THE ISRAELIS THAN TO GO THROUGH THE SOVIETS. HE SUSPECTED, HOWEVER, THAT GIVEN THE SYRIAN MENTALITY, THEY WILL GO ALONG WITH WHATEVER THEIR MONEY BENEFACTOR ASKS. BOUMEDIENNE, WITH WHOM HE DISCUSSED THE SUBJECT IN ALGERIA, HAD ALSO SAID SYRIANS ARE SHORTSIGHTED IF THEY GIVE THE POW LIST TO THE SOVIETS.

7. ALGERIA. HIS TALKS WITH BOUMEDIENNE, SADAT RELATED, HAD BEEN FRUITFUL. AS HE HAD PROMISED, HE HAD RAISED THE MATTER OF LIFTING THE OIL EMBARGO AND RESUMING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. BOUMEDIENNE HAD WELCOMED SADAT'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND WAS PREPARED TO RESUME DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH US ONCE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM WEST BANK COMPLETED. SADAT SAID HE WILL IN NEXT FEW WEEKS SEND FAHMY TO ALGIERS TO MAKE FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIS. BOUMEDIENNE HAD CONTENDED, HOWEVER, THAT OIL EMBARGO SHOULD NOT BE LIFTED UNTIL SOME PROGRESS IS ALSO MADE ON SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT.

8. SAUDI ARABIA. FAISAL HAD VOICED SIMILAR CONCERN ON THIS SCORE. (SO HAD ZAYAD OF ABU DHABI) RECALLING FAISAL IS A GOOD FRIEND

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OF THE US AND OF EGYPT, SADAT THOUGHT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT WE NOT PUT FAISAL IN AN UNFAVORABLE POSITION IN THE ARAB WORLD BY INSISTING HE GO IT ALONE. FAISAL HAS ACQUIRED "HERO" STATUS, WHICH SERVES ALL OF OUR INTERESTS. FAISAL HAD GENERALLY AGREED. NEVERTHELESS TONDO WHAT SADAT PROPOSED.

9. SAME TIME, HAVING IN MIND FAISAL'S STRONG VIEWS ON THE JERUSALEM QUESTION, WHICH SADAT OBSERVED WILL BE ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT ASPECTS OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION TO SOLVE, HE HAD ALSO TALKED WITH SOME OF THE SAUDI PRINCES TO WORK OUT ARRANGEMENTS "BEHIND FAISAL'S BACK" IF NECESSARY. ALL HAD AGREED THAT THE EMBARGO ON US SHOULD BE LIFTED AND US SHOULD BE TREATED LIKE EUROPE AT 15 PERCENT LEVEL. THIS COULD BE ARRANGED IN "UNDETECTED" WAYS. HE GAVE NO EXACT DATE WHEN THIS WAS TO HAPPEN, BUT IMPLIED IT SHOULD BE SOON. HE ALSO WANTED YOU TO KNOW THAT HE IS AGAIN CONTACTING FAISAL ON THE OIL EMBARGO (PARA 7 HIS MESSAGE REFTEL), AND PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR ASHRAF MARWAN IS LEAVING FOR SAUDI ARABIA LATER TODAY.

10. ARAFAT. SADAT SAID THAT HE HAD TALKED WITH ARAFAT AND KING HASSAN, BOTH OF WHOM WILL BE READY AT ANY TIME YOU WISH TO HAVE CONTACT WITH ARAFAT IN MOROCCO. KING HASSAN IS PREPARED TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS AS DESIRED.

11. I THANKED HIM FOR HIS OBSERVATIONS AND ASSURED HIM THEY WILL IMMEDIATELY BE REPORTED. I AGAIN CONGRATULATED HIM ON THE STATESMANSHIP THAT HE HAD SHOWN, WHICH OBVIOUSLY PLEASED HIM. HE WAS GLOWING IN HIS TRIBUTES TO THE PRESIDENT AND TO YOU FOR YOUR EFFORTS. HE TOLD ME THAT I COULD ALWAYS ARRANGE TO SEE HIM, EITHER THROUGH XAHMY OR THROUGH HIS SECRETARIAT. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE ADDED THAT IN UPCOMING GOVERNMENTAL REORGANIZATION, HAFEZ ISMAIL WILL NO LONGER BE PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR AND THAT HAFEZ IS CURRENTLY AT HOME SULKING. INSTEAD, ALL RPT ALL FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS WILL HENCEFORTH BE VESTED IN ISMAIL FAHMY.

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