



Department of State

TELEGRAM

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 00843

EXDIS

E.O. 116521 GDS  
TAGS: OVIP (HENRY A. KISSINGER), SY  
SUBJECT: MOOD IN DAMASCUS

- ANDERSON \_\_\_\_\_
- RATLIFF \_\_\_\_\_
- COOPER \_\_\_\_\_
- FROEBE, SOLOMON \_\_\_\_\_
- SHAYSER \_\_\_\_\_
- LEHMAN \_\_\_\_\_
- STEARMAN \_\_\_\_\_
- KENNEDY \_\_\_\_\_
- LODAL \_\_\_\_\_
- CLIFT \_\_\_\_\_
- SAUNDERS \_\_\_\_\_
- HORAN \_\_\_\_\_
- LOW \_\_\_\_\_
- ELLIOTT \_\_\_\_\_
- OBER \_\_\_\_\_

1. DAMSCENES CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE ALREADY ACHIEVED A DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS AND THE SYRIANS AND NOW IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIDYING UP SOME "MINOR DETAILS" BY THE END OF THE WEEK. WE AGAIN KEEP HEARING THAT THE GENERAL POPULATION INCLUDING MANY MILITARY PERSONNEZ DLOK FORWARD WITH KEEN ANTICIPATION TO "THE ENDING OF THIS PROBLEM" AND TO AN EARLY RETURN OF PEACE TO SYRIA.

2. DESPITE THE GENERAL OPTIMISM AND CONFIDENT ATMOSPHERE IN THE CITY, HOWEVER, IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT TOOK THE OBVIOUS PRECAUTIONARY STEP OF MAKING A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT LAST NIGHT AFTER YOUR DEPARTURE WHICH IN EFFECT PUTS THE BLAME ON ISRAEL FOR "CREATING OF COMPLICATIONS AND THUS WASTING THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE'S TIME BY STALLING OVER MATTERS WHICH HAVE TO BE CARRIED OUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DISENGAGEMENT CONCEPT." THE STATEMENT MAKES THIS CHARGE IN THE CONTEXT OF AN ALLEGED QUOTE BY A RESPONSIBLE AMERICAN OFFICIAL THAT "THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT DR. HENRY KISSINGER WILL END HIS PRESENT TRIP DURING THE NEXT TWO OR THREE DAYS WITHOUT ACHIEVING THE SUCCESS THAT WAS HOPED FOR IN REACHING A DISENGAGEMENT

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AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SYRIAN AND ISRAELI FORCES. THE STATEMENT CONTINUED THAT THE AMERICAN OFFICIAL ACCOMPANYING KISSINGER "REFERRED TO THIS POSSIBILITY JUSTIFYING IT BY THE EXISTENCE OF SEVERAL COMPLICATED PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN SOVED YET."

3. IT IS CLEAR TO ME AT LEAST THAT THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT WANTS TO BE ON RECORD AS PUTTING THE BLAME ON ISRAEL SHOULD THESE DISCUSSIONS FAIL. IN ANY EVENT THE STATEMENT WAS CARRIED ON DAMASCUS RADIO THIS MORNING. IT WAS ALSO PUBLISHED BY BOTH LOCAL NEWSPAPERS WHICH AGAIN THIS MORNING DISPLAYED PROMINENTLY PLACED PICTURES OF YOU WITH THE PRESIDENT IN AN OBVIOUSLY FRIENDLY AND CORDIAL ATMOSPHERE.

4. DEAN BRELIS, CBS, (PLEASE PROTECT), HAS JUST TOLD ME THAT HIS HIGH-LEVEL CONTACTS ARE STILL HOPEFUL THAT A SETTLEMENT WILL BE SIGNED BUT ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY SKEPTICAL DUE TO WHAT THE DESCRIBE AS "ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE." THESE SOURCES HAVE TOLD BRELIS THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE NOW QUIBBLING OVER DETAILS IN A WAY WHICH MAKES THE SYRIANS SUSPICIOUS THAT THE ISRAELIS AS THEY DID IN THE MAJALOT NEGOTIATIONS INTEND TO TRICK THEM AT THE LAST HOUR. ONE HIGH-RANKING MILITARY OFFICER TOLD BRELIS THAT WE ARE PROCEEDING IN GOOD FAITH BUT THE ISRAELIS MUST REMEMBER THAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THE GOLAN WHICH IS AFTER ALL SYRIAN TERRITORY. THE SAME SOURCE SAID THAT IF THE TALKS FAIL THE RESPONSIBILITY WILL BE ENTIRELY ISRAEL'S BOTHWARDS. (COMMENT: ISA SABBAGH AS FOR WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTERWARDS. CONVERSATION WITH ME TOLD WHO WAS PRESENTLY DURING BRELIS' CONVERSATION MENTIONED ME SUBSEQUENTLY THAT OFFICIAL SYRIAN STATEMENT MENTIONED ABOVE AS WELL AS BRELIS' SOURCES CAME VERY CLOSE TO THE SYRIAN POSITION AS EXPOUNDED TO YOU LAST NIGHT BY THE PRESIDENT.

5. A USINT EMPLOYEE LAST NIGHT PAID A CONDOLENCE VISIT ON THE MINISTER OF SUPPLY WHOSE FATHER JUST DIED. AS BEFITTING THE DATH OF A RELATIVE OF A MINISTER THE HOUSE WAS FILLED WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, MILITARY OFFICERS, FRIENDS AND ORDINARY CITIZENS COMING TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS. ONE OF THE CALLER, A MUSLIM VILLAGER FROM THE HOME TOWN OF THE MINISTER WELL-KNOWN FOR HIS NEAR ADULATION OF NASSER OVER

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THE YEARS, SURPRISED THE GROUP WHICH HAD BEEN DISCUSSING YOUR CURRENT PEACE EFFORTS IN POSITIVE MANNER BY TELLING OUR EMPLOYEE IN A LOUD VOICE "YOUR BOSS HAS ACHIEVED GREATER GLORY THAN NASSER WHOM WE HAD ALWAYS CONSIDERED TO BE SECOND ONLY TO THE PROPHET MOHAMMAD."

8. COMMENT: I GUESS THE ABOVE STORY MEANS YOU ARE NOW A "BOSS=PROPHET" AND THUS PACK A DOUBLE WHALLOP! SCOTES

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