

#95

# OUTGOING TELEGRAM

TEL EXT PAGE

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**ORIGINATOR** AMEMB TEL AVIV, IMMEDIATE  
**ACTION ADDRESS** JERUSALEM  
**PRECEDENCE** SECSTATE WASHDC, NIACT IMMEDIATE  
 SECDEF WASHDC, NIACT IMMEDIATE  
 INFO WHITEHOUSE WASHDC, IMMEDIATE  
 AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV, IMMEDIATE

**NOTES**

FROM AMB. LEWIS IN JERUSALEM

E.O. 12356: ~~SECRET~~

TAGS: PEPR, IS, EG, US, JO, SA, RLO, XF

SUBJECT: AMERICAN PEACE INITIATIVES SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
 WEINBERGER'S MEETINGS WITH PRIME MINISTER  
 BEGIN AND OTHER ISRAELI LEADERS

REF: TEL AVIV 13327

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2. SUMMARY. SECRETARY WEINBERGER'S MEETINGS WITH BEGIN, SHAMIR, SHARON AND OTHER ISRAELI POLITICAL LEADERS WERE DEVOTED ALMOST TOTALLY TO THE TOTALLY NEGATIVE ISRAELI REACTION TO PRESIDENT REAGAN'S PEACE INITIATIVE. THE LONG MEETING WITH BEGIN WAS MOSTLY A REHASH OF THE CABINET COMMUNIQUE ISSUED EARLIER IN THE DAY, ACCENTING THE GOI'S DECISION THAT "ON THE BASIS OF THESE (AMERICAN) POSITIONS IT WILL NOT ENTER INTO ANY NEGOTIATIONS WITH ANY PARTY." BEGIN WAS ANGRIER IF POSSIBLE ABOUT THE LACK OF CONSULTATION WITH ISRAEL AND WHAT THIS IMPLIED FOR THE FUTURE RELATIONSHIP THAN ABOUT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PROPOSALS, THOUGH HE REJECTED ALL OF THEM OUT OF HAND AS UNACCEPTABLE DEVIATIONS FROM THE CDA. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO CARRY ON SOME "INFORMAL, UNOFFICIAL DISCUSSIONS" OF THE DETAILS WITH AMBASSADOR LEWIS, BEING CAREFUL, HOWEVER, TO AVOID VIOLATING THE CABINET'S DECISION QUOTED ABOVE. WEINBERGER VIGOROUSLY DEFENDED THE PRESIDENT'S MOTIVES, COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL'S WELL-BEING AND SECURITY, AND FIDELITY TO THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENT. BEGIN AND HIS COLLEAGUES EXPLICITLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE PRESIDENT'S GOOD INTENTIONS, BUT REJECTED OUT OF HAND THE RESULTS OF THE INITIATIVE. END SUMMARY.

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3. THIS MESSAGE CONTAINS HIGHLIGHTS AND ANALYSIS OF SECRETARY WEINBERGER'S DISCUSSIONS WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN, FOREIGN MINISTER SHAMIR, DEFENSE MINISTER SHARON AND SEVERAL OTHER ISRAELI POLITICAL LEADERS ABOUT THE AMERICAN PEACE INITIATIVE CONVEYED TO PRIME MINISTER BEGIN IN A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT REAGAN 24 HOURS PRIOR TO SECRETARY WEINBERG'S ARRIVAL IN ISRAEL. (DETAILED REPORTING MESSAGES WILL FOLLOW BY SEPTELS.)

4. IN A TWO-HOUR MEETING WITH BEGIN, SHARON AND SHAMIR AT BEGIN'S VACATION HOTEL ROOM IN NAHARIYA DURING LATE AFTERNOON OF THURSDAY, AUGUST 2, WEINBERGER LISTENED TO A WEARY, SOMBER, AND DETERMINED PRIME MINISTER GO OVER FROM NOTES IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL ALL OF THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIONS TO THE NEW AMERICAN POSITIONS WHICH HAD BEEN EARLIER CHARACTERIZED AFTER YESTERDAY'S CABINET MEETING IN ALMOST PRECISELY IDENTICAL TERMS. IN FACT, THE WEINBERGER-BEGIN MEETING WAS A REPLAY OF THE CABINET COMMUNIQUE (SEE REFTEL FOR TEXT), AND THE WORDS WERE SO SIMILAR IT IS OBVIOUS THAT BEGIN DRAFTED THE COMMUNIQUE HIMSELF AS IS OFTEN HIS WONT.

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5. BEFORE GETTING DOWN TO THOSE SPECIFIC OBJECTIONS TO A NUMBER OF U.S. POSITIONS, BEGIN ASKED SECRETARY WEINBERGER TO CONVEY TO THE PRESIDENT HOW "OFFICIALLY AND STRONGLY" HE PROTESTED THE "GRAVE DEVIATION FROM PROCEDURE; WE WERE NOT CONSULTED AT ALL ABOUT THESE PROPOSALS WHILE YOU WERE SUBMITTING DOCUMENTS TO THE JORDANIANS, THE EGYPTIANS AND THE SAUDIS. IT IS TRULY ASTONISHING THAT HUSSEIN WAS CONSULTED FIRST, FOR HE HAS OPPOSED THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENT FROM THE BEGINNING AND SAUDI ARABIA HAS NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH IT, HAVING VIOLENTLY OPPOSED WHAT WE ACHIEVED AT CAMP DAVID." BEGIN THEN REPEATED THE COMPLAINT ABOUT THE ALLEGED VIOLATION BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT OF THE 1973 AND 1975 COMMITMENTS MENTIONED IN THE CABINET COMMUNIQUE. HOWEVER, HE STRESSED, THIS GRAVE VIOLATION OF PROPER CONSULTATION PROCEDURES IS NOT ONLY A MATTER OF "FORMAL COMMITMENTS." "I SPEAK OF THE ESSENCE OF THE MATTER," SAID BEGIN, "FOR THESE SUBJECTS TOUCH ON OUR NATIONAL EXISTENCE. YOU SHOULD ALWAYS CONSULT US FIRST, WE MIGHT EVEN AGREE WITH SOME OF YOUR POINTS; BUT WE ARE ENTITLED TO BE CONSULTED BEFORE YOU GO TO ANY OF OUR ENEMIES."

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6. SECRETARY WEINBERGER RESPONDED THAT HE KNEW THE PRESIDENT HAD BEEN DISCUSSING FOR SOME TIME THE NEED TO RELAUNCH NEGOTIATIONS NEEDED TO FILL IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENT. HE KNEW THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN HAD CERTAINLY NOT INTENDED HIS PROPOSALS AS A DEVIATION FROM CAMP DAVID BUT RATHER AS A CONTINUATION AND WAY TO COMPLETE THAT FRAMEWORK. AFTER THE WAR IN LEBANON, WEINBERGER SAID, THE PRESIDENT FELT IT ALL THE MORE NECESSARY TO SPEED UP THE TIMETABLE, AND WEINBERGER HAD BEEN GENERALLY AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THINGS WERE MOVING TO A CONCLUSION. IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE TO WAIT A BIT, BUT, SAID WEINBERGER, WITH THE PLO EVACUATION FROM BEIRUT CONCLUDED THE PRESIDENT THOUGHT IT WAS NOW THE MOMENT TO MOVE AHEAD. WEINBERGER STRESSED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD DECIDED ON HIS PROPOSALS AFTER A GREAT DEAL OF THOUGHT AND CONSULTATION, THAT BASED ON HIS LONG PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT HE KNOWS HOW DEEPLY THE PRESIDENT ENTERS INTO THE SPECIFIC ISSUES AND THAT THERE IS NOTHING IN THE WORLD HE WANTS MORE THAN PEACE, ESPECIALLY PEACE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST. WEINBERGER ASSURED BEGIN THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD NEVER SUPPORT A PALESTINIAN STATE, ALTHOUGH HE BELIEVES THAT THERE MUST BE SOME SOLUTION FOUND FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, AND THAT THAT SOLUTION IS PROPERLY TO BE FOUND IN THE CARRYING OUT OF THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENTS WHICH INCORPORATE FULLY UNSC RESOLUTION 242. WEINBERGER SAID THAT THE INITIAL APPROACH BEING MADE TO JORDAN WAS PURELY BECAUSE IT WAS NECESSARY TO FIND A WAY TO GET JORDAN TO JOIN THE CAMP DAVID NEGOTIATIONS AS THEY HAD BEEN INVITED TO DO, AND IT WAS IMPORTANT TO SEE WHETHER THAT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE BEFORE GOING AHEAD TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSALS IN DETAIL WITH OTHERS. THAT WAS THE ONLY REASON JORDAN WAS APPROACHED FIRST.

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7. AS FOR THE ACCELERATED TIMING FOR THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH, THIS WAS A RESULT OF THE FACT THAT THERE WERE SO MANY INACCURATE LEAKS ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS ALREADY COMING OUT THAT HE DECIDED TO GO AHEAD WITH THE SPEECH ON THE EVENING OF ~~ABOUT~~ 1 TO MAKE SURE THAT AN ACCURATE VERSION OF HIS PROPOSALS WAS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN RATHER THAN A DISTORTED ONE.

8. BEGIN THEN DROPPED THE PROCEDURAL ARGUMENT, SAYING WITH CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS: "WELL PERHAPS YOU WON THE JORDANIANS OVER TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS, OR PERHAPS NOT. BUT WHATEVER THE CASE, YOU HAVE LOST ONE PARTNER FOR THIS NEGOTIATION AND THAT IS ISRAEL. THE CABINET DECIDED UNANIMOUSLY TODAY NOT TO NEGOTIATE WITH ANYONE ON THE BASIS OF THE POSITIONS AMBASSADOR LEWIS HAS GIVEN TO ME ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT; NOT WITH JORDAN, NOT WITH EGYPT, NOT WITH THE U.S. AND NOT WITH ANYONE ON THE BASIS OF THOSE POSITIONS."

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9. WEINBERGER SAID THAT SUCH A DECISION WOULD BE A GREAT PITY, AND REPEATEDLY THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE CONVERSATION HE RETURNED TO ASK THE PRIME MINISTER NOT TO FORECLOSE FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS BUT RATHER TO TAKE TIME FOR MORE REFLECTION. BEGIN'S ULTIMATE RESPONSE TO THIS APPEAL WAS TO SAY THAT HIS CABINET HAD BEEN STEEPED IN THESE ISSUES FOR YEARS, THAT THEY HAD HAD MANY HOURS OF DELIBERATION BOTH BEFORE AND DURING THE CABINET MEETING ABOUT THEIR RESPONSE, AND THAT THERE WAS NO NEED FOR FURTHER "REFLECTION."

10. MUCH OF THE REMAINDER OF THE TIME WAS TAKEN UP WITH BEGIN'S LABORIOUS REHEARSING OF THE ARGUMENTS ON SPECIFIC POINTS ALREADY WELL COVERED IN THE CABINET COMMUNIQUE. AFTER ABOUT 30 MINUTES OF BEGIN'S REMARKS, HE ENDED WITH THE LATIN PHRASE WHICH TRANSLATES: "I HAVE SPOKEN AND SAVED MY SOUL," A FAVORITE BEGIN EXPRESSION WHEN HE HAS DELIVERED A PARTICULARLY NEGATIVE OR HARSH STATEMENT TO ME OR OTHER AMERICAN OFFICIAL.

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11. WEINBERGER REBUTTED VIGOROUSLY A NUMBER OF BEGIN'S POINTS, ESPECIALLY THE ALLEGATION THAT THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS REPRESENT DEVIATIONS FROM THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENT, WHICH HE STRESSED WAS NEVER MEANT TO BE UNCHANGEABLE BUT RATHER WAS A FRAMEWORK TO BE FILLED OUT AND COMPLETED BY NEGOTIATIONS. WEINBERGER STRESSED AGAIN THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL BE DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED THAT HIS CAREFULLY DRAWN PROPOSALS WERE REJECTED SO SUMMARILY. WEINBERGER ALSO UNDERScoreD THE PRESIDENT'S UNSHAKEABLE COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL'S SECURITY, HIS OPPOSITION TO A PALESTINIAN STATE, THE FACT THAT THE CALL FOR A SETTLEMENTS' "FREEZE" IS INTENDED AS A PRAGMATIC WAY TO PRESERVE THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE LIVING IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA UNTIL THEY CAN EXERCISE THEIR VOTING RIGHTS AND MAKE DETERMINATIONS THEMSELVES ABOUT THE FUTURE.

WEINBERGER SAID HE FOUND FRANKLY "INCREDIBLE" BEGIN'S VIVID IMAGE OF KING HUSSEIN WELCOMING YASSER ARAFAT BACK TO TAKE OVER THE WEST BANK ONCE HE HAD OBTAINED IT FROM ISRAEL, IN LIGHT OF THE WELL-KNOWN DEEP DISTRUST HUSSEIN HOLDS FOR ARAFAT. WEINBERGER SPOKE ELOQUENTLY AND AT SOME LENGTH ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S CONVICTION THAT ISRAEL'S SECURITY HAD TO BE ASSURED IN THE LONG RUN BY PEACE SETTLEMENTS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS AND THAT IT IS TO THIS GOAL THAT HIS PROPOSALS ARE DIRECTED.

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12. AMBASSADOR ARENS, WHO WAS PRESENT ALSO THEN INTRODUCED WHAT HE CHARACTERIZED AS THE "LONG TERM EFFECT ON U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS" WHICH WOULD BE THE RESULT OF THE U.S. HAVING ABANDONED ITS ROLE AS "HONEST BROKER" AND NOW GOING ON RECORD WITH POSITIONS WE "KNEW IN ADVANCE WOULD PROBABLY BE REJECTED BY ISRAEL," AND ALL THIS WITHOUT ANY PRIOR CONSULTATION. SHARON THEN CHIMED IN TO SAY THAT AFTER READING THE LETTER AND THE PROPOSALS HE "DID NOT SEE EVEN ONE POINT THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED." HE ADDED ICILY THAT "OUR SETTLEMENT PROGRAM WILL GO AHEAD ACCORDING TO PLAN; THERE WILL BE NO FREEZE OF ANY KIND. NOR WILL WE EVER CONSIDER, SHARON INSISTED, RELINQUISHING RESPONSIBILITY FOR INTERNAL AS WELL AS EXTERNAL SECURITY OR ASKING ANYONE ELSE TO PROVIDE US WITH THOSE GUARANTEES AGAINST PLO TERRORISM FROM THE TERRITORIES. (IN A SARCASTIC ASIDE, SHARON ASKED WEINBERGER WHETHER HE WOULD SEND THE U.S. MARINES TO PROTECT ISRAEL'S VILLAGES FROM PLO TERROR IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA.)

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13. BOTH BEGIN AND SHARON ALLUDED BITTERLY TO THE FACT THAT WHILE "ISRAEL GAVE THE U.S. A VICTORY OVER THE PLO IN LEBANON ON A SILVER PLATTER, EVERYONE HAS NOW BEEN PRAISED FOR THEIR GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS IN BEIRUT EXCEPT THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT OR THE ISRAELI ARMED FORCES."

14. AT THE END OF WHAT HAD CLEARLY BECOME A FRUITLESS STRINGING OUT OF THIS TOTALLY NEGATIVE CONVERSATION, I ASKED THE PRIME MINISTER FOR A CLARIFICATION OF THE MEANING OF THE CABINET DECISION THAT "THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL HAS RESOLVED THAT ON THE BASIS OF THESE POSITIONS IT WILL NOT ENTER INTO ANY NEGOTIATIONS WITH ANY PARTY." BEGIN THEN RESTATED THAT DECISION WITHOUT FURTHER ILLUMINATING IT, EXCEPT TO STRESS THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT NEGOTIATE ABOUT OR OVER THE POSITIONS WE HAVE NOW PUT FORWARD, WITH US OR WITH ANYONE ELSE. HOWEVER, HE POINTED TO THE NEXT PARAGRAPH IN THE CABINET COMMUNIQUE WHICH RESTATES ISRAEL'S READINESS TO RENEW AUTONOMY NEGOTIATIONS FORTHWITH "IN TOTAL CONFORMITY WITH THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS."

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15. SOME OF THE SAME GROUND WAS COVERED FRIDAY MORNING, AUGUST 3 DURING SECRETARY WEINBERGER'S MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SHAMIR AND HIS COLLEAGUES. THERE WAS NO FURTHER MEETING OF THE MINDS, AND THE ISSUE OF THE U.S.'S HAVING VIOLATED PREVIOUS COMMITMENTS AND CHANGED ITS POSITION HELD OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS OF NOT PUTTING FORWARD ITS OWN PREFERRED SOLUTIONS FOR FINAL STATUS BECAME THE CENTER OF A FAIRLY LENGTHY DISCUSSION BETWEEN SHAMIR, WEINBERGER, ARENS, LEWIS AND DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER BEN-NEIR. SHAMIR WAS SOFTER IN STYLE THAN BEGIN, BUT NO LESS FIRM IN REJECTING THE PROCESS AS WELL AS SUBSTANCE OF THE U.S. PROPOSAL.

16. AT THE END OF THE SHAMIR MEETING, LEWIS OFFERED TO MEET INFORMALLY WITH THE ONLY OTHER "SURVIVOR" OF THE CAMP DAVID CONFERENCE IN EITHER THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OR U.S. EMBASSY, LEGAL ADVISOR ELI RUBENSTEIN, AND ANYONE ELSE WHO WAS INTERESTED, TO GO OVER IN DETAIL SOME OF THE ISRAELI ARGUMENTS ABOUT "DEVIATIONS." WHILE MAKING CLEAR THAT THERE COULD BE NO "OFFICIAL" NEGOTIATIONS" IN LIGHT OF THE CABINET DECISION, SHAMIR AND HIS COLLEAGUES SAID THEY WOULD WELCOME LEWIS' OFFER FOR SUCH INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS. I WILL FOLLOW UP ON THIS NEXT WEEK WITH RUBENSTEIN AND OTHERS TO SEE IF THERE ARE ANY KINKS IN THE SOLID FRONT OF THE ISRAELI OPPOSITION TO THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS WHICH MAY LATER BE EXPANDED BY PERSISTENT DIPLOMACY.

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17. WEINBERGER ALSO MET WITH A NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE ISRAELI CABINET AND POLITICAL/MILITARY LEADERSHIP THURSDAY NIGHT AT A STAG DINNER AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. FROM CONVERSATIONS AT THAT DINNER, IT IS CLEAR THAT SHIMON PERES AND THE LABOR PARTY ARE GENERALLY VERY SUPPORTIVE OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS, SEEING IN THEM MUCH OF LABOR'S OWN PROGRAM. FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER EZER WEIZMAN ALSO TOLD WEINBERGER THAT HE WAS FULLY BEHIND REAGAN'S PROPOSALS WHICH WERE "COMPLETELY IN ACCORD WITH THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENT, AND I WAS ONE OF ITS ARCHITECTS." OTHERS AT THE DINNER FROM THE GOVERNMENT SIDE WERE RESERVED, THOUGH SOME OF THE LESS HAWKISH MEMBERS OF THE CABINET ARE CLEARLY MUCH MORE OFFENDED BY THE PROCEDURE FOLLOWED IN PUTTING FORWARD THE PROPOSALS THAN BY SOME OF THE SPECIFIC POSITIONS WE ARE ADVOCATING. AS THE FUROR OVER THE CHANGE IN U.S. TACTICS TOWARD OUR ROLE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS BEGINS TO SUBSIDE, THERE WILL BE IN ALL LIKELIHOOD SOME TENDENCY ON THE PART OF SOME CABINET MEMBERS TO LOOK MORE SERIOUSLY AT THE CONTENT OF THE AMERICAN POSITIONS. HOWEVER, ONE CANNOT AND MUST NOT EXPECT BEGIN TO BACK AWAY FROM THE TOTAL HOSTILITY HE HAS THUS FAR DISPLAYED TOWARD THE ENTIRE SET OF PROPOSALS DELIVERED TOGETHER WITH THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER ON TUESDAY NIGHT.

18. RECOMMEND DEPARTMENT REPEAT THIS MESSAGE TO CAIRO, JIDDA AND AMMAN. LEWIS##

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