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Intelligence Information Cable

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THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE

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CITE [Redacted]

DIST 20 AUGUST 1977

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COUNTRY: [Redacted] EO 13526 3.3(b)(1)>25Yrs
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DOI : 19 AUGUST 1977

SUBJECT: (1) CURRENT PLO POSITION ON 242
(2) SOVIET AND ARAB ADVICE TO PLO ON 242

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SUMMARY: THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO) HAS NOT FINALLY REJECTED THE IDEA OF ANNOUNCING ACCEPTANCE OF UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242 WHICH WOULD OPEN AN OFFICIAL DIALOGUE WITH THE UNITED STATES. THE PREVAILING MOOD WITHIN THE PLO LEADERSHIP, HOWEVER, IS INCREASINGLY AGAINST SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT. THE SAUDIS, EGYPTIANS AND THE SOVIETS HAVE URGED THE PLO LEADERSHIP TO MAKE A RESERVED ANNOUNCEMENT OF

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ACCEPTANCE OF RESOLUTION 242. THE SYRIANS HAVE ADVISED THE PLO NOT TO ANNOUNCE ACCEPTANCE OF THE RESOLUTION UNLESS THE UNITED STATES OFFERS A MORE TANGIBLE QUID PRO QUO THAN JUST A PLO/US DIALOGUE. THE 18 AUGUST COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WAS THE RESULT OF SYRIAN PRESSURE AND MADE TO PLEASE THE SYRIAN REGIME.

1. AS OF LATE 19 AUGUST, THE PLO LEADERSHIP WAS STILL DISCUSSING A POSSIBLE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ACCEPTANCE OF RESOLUTION 242. THE MOOD OF THE PLO LEADERSHIP, HOWEVER, IS INCREASINGLY AGAINST SUCH A STATEMENT. DESPITE EFFORTS BY FATAH MODERATES TO CONVINCE THE REST OF THE LEADERSHIP THAT A DIALOGUE WITH THE US ENTAILS SUFFICIENT LONG RANGE BENEFITS TO JUSTIFY MAKING THE REQUIRED STATEMENT ON 242, THE PLO LEADERSHIP REMAINS LARGELY CONVINCED THAT IT MUST DEMAND MORE THAN JUST TALKS WITH THE US BEFORE GIVING UP WHAT IT CONSIDERS TO BE ITS ONLY MAJOR "CARD" IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

2. ON 17 AUGUST, OFFICIALS OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN BEIRUT MET WITH PLO OFFICIALS. THE SOVIETS TOLD THE PLO OFFICIALS THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM MOSCOW, INSTRUCTING THEM TO MEET WITH THE PLO AND TO DELIVER THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE: "THE SOVIET

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LEADERSHIP CONSIDERS IT IMPORTANT THAT THE PLO ACCEPT UN RESOLUTION 242, WITH THE RESERVATIONS PROPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES. SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF ACCEPTANCE WOULD DENY THE ISRAELIS AND THE UNITED STATES THE JUSTIFICATION THAT THEY HAVE SO FAR USED TO KEEP THE PALESTINIANS OUT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST QUESTION." THE PLO OFFICIALS NOTED THE SIGNIFICANT ESCALATION OF SOVIET PRESSURE FROM THAT OF URGING "FLEXIBILITY" TO THAT OF SPECIFICALLY URGING THE PLO TO ACCEPT THE US POSITION ON 242.

3. THE SYRIANS ON THE OTHER HAND HAVE URGED THE PLO NOT TO ACCEPT RESOLUTION 242 UNLESS MORE THAN A DIALOGUE WITH THE US WOULD RESULT. ON 17 AUGUST, SYRIAN PRESIDENT HAFIZ AL-ASAD MET WITH AHMAD DAJJANI, A MEMBER OF THE PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, IN DAMASCUS. ASAD REITERATED HIS POSITION THAT THE PLO SHOULD HOLD OUT FOR MORE THAN JUST A DIALOGUE WITH THE US. ASAD TOLD DAJJANI THAT, DURING US SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE'S VISIT TO DAMASCUS, ASAD HAD ASKED VANCE SPECIFICALLY WHETHER THE PALESTINIANS WOULD OBTAIN MORE THAN JUST A DIALOGUE WITH THE US IN EXCHANGE FOR A STATEMENT OF ACCEPTANCE OF 242. ASAD SAID THAT VANCE WAS EMPHATIC IN HIS STATEMENT THAT THE

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US WAS NOT OFFERING ANYTHING MORE THAN AN AGREEMENT TO TALK WITH THE PLO.

4. THE ANNOUNCEMENT, ON 18 AUGUST, THAT THE PLO CONTINUED TO OPPOSE THE ACCEPTANCE OF RESOLUTION 242 WAS MADE TO PLEASE THE SYRIANS. THE SELECTION OF MUHAMMAD A B U M A Y Z A R TO MAKE THIS ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE BECAUSE ABU MAYZAR HAS CLOSE TIES WITH THE SYRIANS.

5. THE SAUDIS AND EGYPTIANS CONTINUE TO URGE PLO ACCEPTANCE OF RESOLUTION 242. THE PLO HAS ATTEMPTED TO HANDLE ITS MAJOR MOVES REGARDING THIS RESOLUTION WITH THE SAUDIS. ON 3 AUGUST 1977 YASIR A R A F A T , THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, FORMALLY AGREED WITH SAUDI CROWN PRINCE F A H D IBN ABD AL-AZIZ AND SAUDI FOREIGN MINISTER PRINCE S A U D IBN FAYSAL THAT THE PLO WOULD AGREE TO MAKE THE ANNOUNCEMENT PROPOSED BY THE US, IN EXCHANGE FOR US AGREEMENT TO THREE CONDITIONS: (1) US RECOGNITION OF THE PLO AS "THE LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE," (2) THE OFFICIAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE US AND PLO, AND (3) A US COMMITMENT TO INVITE THE PLO TO THE GENEVA MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE, ON THE BASIS OF THE PLO'S RESERVED POSITION ON RESOLUTION 242. ON 9 AUGUST

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PRINCE SAUD MET WITH PLO CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER MAHMUD
A B B A S (ABU MAZIN) AND MUHAMMAD ABU MAYZAR. HE TOLD THEM
THAT THE US COULD NOT ACCEPT THE PLO CONDITIONS AND HAD ADDED
THE FOLLOWING "CLARIFICATIONS" TO THE US POSITION: (1) ACCEPTANCE
OF THE PLO AS A PARTNER IN A DIALOGUE WOULD NOT MEAN US RECOG-
NITION OF THE PLO AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN
PEOPLE, (2) THE US WOULD CONTINUE TO SPEAK OF THE NEED FOR
A "PALESTINIAN ENTITY" AND WOULD NOT USE LANGUAGE CALLING FOR
AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE, AND (3) THE US COULD NOT
INVITE THE PLO TO GENEVA UNLESS ALL ORIGINAL PARTIES TO THE
CONFERENCE, INCLUDING ISRAEL, AGREED. PRINCE SAUD URGED THE
PLO TO ACCEPT THE US POSITION, EVEN WITH THESE CLARIFICATIONS.

6. ON 11 AUGUST ABU MAZIN MET WITH SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER
 'ABD AL-HALIM K H A D D A M AND DISCUSSED THE US AND SAUDI
 POSITIONS WITH HIM. KHADDAM REACTED NEGATIVELY TO THE IDEA
OF ACCEPTANCE OF THE US POSITION. HE ASKED THE PLO OFFICIAL
RHETORICALLY WHETHER THE PALESTINIANS WOULD SELL THEMSELVES
SO CHEAPLY.

7. ISRAELI MOVES TO EXTEND SOCIAL SERVICES TO RESIDENTS OF
THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND TO ESTABLISH NEW SETTLEMENTS IN

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OCCUPIED TERRITORIES GREATLY STRENGTHENED THE HANDS OF HARD LINERS ON THE QUESTION OF RESOLUTION 242. FATAH MODERATES HAVE TRIED TO ARGUE THAT THE US CONDEMNATION OF ISRAEL FOR THESE ACTIONS IS FAR STRONGER THAN USUAL US LANGUAGE ON THE SUBJECT OF ISRAELI ACTIONS. THE HARD LINERS, HOWEVER, ARGUE THAT THE US HAS NOT TAKEN ANY ACTION TO PREVENT OR REVERSE THESE ACTIONS AND THAT THE SITUATION CALLS FOR ACTIONS RATHER THAN JUST STATEMENTS.

8. FIELD DISSEM:

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