

C/IAS

OFFICE OF CURRENT OPERATIONS

Bulletin

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18 February 1982

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44AM-MIDEAST-INFORMATION (2 TAKES)Z

4BY ROBERT GARYZ

JERUSALEM, FEB 18, REUTER -- ISRAEL HAS GIVEN THE UNITED STATES INFORMATION TO BACK UP DEFENSE MINISTER ARIEL SHARON'S CHARGE THAT SYRIA IS PREPARING FOR WAR; ISRAELI GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SAID TODAY.

MR SHARON TOLD A TELEVISION INTERVIEWER YESTERDAY THAT ISRAEL HAD DEFINITE INFORMATION THAT SYRIA WAS GETTING SET FOR WAR WITH THIS COUNTRY.

"I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT RUMORS BUT CONCRETE FACTS," THE MINISTER SAID. HE SAID THE PREPARATIONS WERE UNDER WAY DESPITE THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT'S INVOLVEMENT IN AN INTERNAL CRACKDOWN ON THE FUNDAMENTALIST MOSLEM BROTHERHOOD.

ONE ISRAELI OFFICIAL SAID TODAY IT WAS SAFE TO ASSUME THAT THE INFORMATION REFERRED TO BY MR SHARON HAD BEEN FORWARDED TO WASHINGTON.

MR SHARON SAID ISRAEL WOULD NOT INITIATE A WAR AGAINST PALESTINIAN BASES IN LEBANON BUT ADDED THAT IT "IS POSSIBLE WAR WILL BE FORCED UPON US."

YESTERDAY, A LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION LABOR PARTY TOLD THE KNESSET (PARLIAMENT) THAT DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SIMCHA EHRlich HAD LEAKED TO THE PRESS AN ALLEGED PLAN FOR AN INVASION OF SOUTH LEBANON.Z

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STAR-MIDEAST-INFORMATION 2 JERUSALEM

THE LABOR MEMBER, MOSHE SHAHAL, SAID MR EARLICH, WHO IS A LEADER OF THE LIBERAL FACTION IN THE RULING LIKUD PARTY AND KNOWN TO BE A MODERATE ON THE ISRAELI-ARAB CONFLICT, HAD LEAKED THE PLAN SO AS TO PREVENT IT FROM BEING CARRIED OUT.

MR EARLICH PROMPTLY DENIED THE ALLEGATION, CALLING IT A "BASE SLANDER."

PRIME MINISTER MENACHEM BEGIN'S OFFICE DENIED AN ISRAELI NEWSPAPER REPORT TODAY THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH MR EARLICH.

ISRAELI NEWSPAPERS HAVE CONTINUED TO REPORT THAT GUERRILLA FORCES IN SOUTH LEBANON ARE BEING STRENGTHENED.

THE PAPERS ALSO REPORTED DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS THAT A MAJOR ISRAELI MILITARY ACTION AGAINST GUERRILLA CONCENTRATIONS IN SOUTH LEBANON WAS CANCELED BECAUSE OF U.S. PRESSURE AND ADVERSE WEATHER.

BUT DEFENSE MINISTER SHARON SAID IN HIS TELEVISION INTERVIEW THAT NO SUCH ACTION HAD BEEN PLANNED.

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