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REPORT NO. CSDB-312/00976-69

DATE DISTR. 23 April 1969

COUNTRY Middle East

DOI 25 March 1969

SUBJECT ~~Activity of the Palestine Arab~~
~~Delegation in New York City~~
~~Concerning the Sirhan SIRHAN~~
~~Trial~~

ACQ March 1969

FIELD NO.

SOURCE A Middle East national with a leftist political orientation who has good contacts among the permanent missions of the developing countries at the United Nations. Source has been an accurate reporter on Middle East and African affairs for several years.

1. At the request of Issa NAKHLEH, an official of the Palestine Arab Delegation in New York City, Rashad MURAD, Director of the New York Office of the Arab League, called an emergency meeting of the Arab group at the United Nations for the morning of 25 March 1969. The meeting was held at the offices of the Arab League in the Chrysler Building. It lasted for one hour. MURAD presided over the meeting; Ambassador Edward GHORRA the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations (UN), who is the Chairman of the Arab group for March, was not present. Representatives from the Arab permanent missions to the UN and a representative of the New York Office of the Palestine Liberation Organization also attended.

2. Rashad MURAD announced that the meeting had been called in order to present a report from Issa NAKHLEH of the Palestine Arab Delegation, who had recently returned from California where he had observed the trial of Sirhan SIRHAN for the assassination of U.S. Senator Robert F. KENNEDY. Before NAKHLEH presented his report there ensued a dispute concerning the summoning of an emergency meeting of the Arab group on behalf of a subordinate individual within the Palestine Arab Delegation. Other than MURAD only Ambassador Jamil BAROODY, who represented Saudi Arabia, defended the action by NAKHLEH and MURAD.

3. NAKHLEH then presented his report, which consisted of his impressions of the trial, accompanied by readings from "the trial record". NAKHLEH described SIRHAN as "an Arab

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guerrilla" and stated that his action was "motivated by political events". NAKHLEH indicated that he believed that SIRHAN will be convicted but that he will not receive the death penalty. NAKHLEH stated that he had obtained the approval of Sirhan SIRHAN to act as an adviser to SIRHAN in the event that SIRHAN wishes to appeal the forthcoming verdict. NAKHLEH recommended that if SIRHAN appeals his conviction, a group of Arab attorneys should travel to the U.S. to observe the appeal proceedings.

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4. NAKHLEH informed the group that one of his principal aims in briefing the group was to enlist their support for a trip to the Middle East which he plans to make in the near future in order to collect funds to aid SIRHAN's defense. NAKHLEH requested that the Arab representatives present cable their governments asking that the latter aid him during his fund-raising trip to the Middle East. No commitments were made at the meeting by the representatives present; however, it is judged that a number of the representatives will send the cable requested. (Source Comment: NAKHLEH has the reputation of being a loose handler of funds; in the past some of the money collected for alleged support of various Arab causes has found its way into his pockets.)

5. Field Dissem: None. (Also sent: USUN.)

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