

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 OMB-01 ACDA-19 SAB-01 DRC-01

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R 191441Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6533

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USINT CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2003

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS IS XF

SUBJECT: FEDAYEEN "MODERATION"

REF: TEL AVIV 875 (NOTAL)

1. FACT THAT WE OFTEN REFER TO 'ARAFAT, BLACK SEPTEMBERST
SALAH KHALAF OR OTHER OF THEIR STRIPE AS FEDAYEEN "MODERATES"
REFLECTS ONLY OUR ASSESSMENT THAT THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD
ISSUE OF ME SETTLEMENT ARE RELATIVELY MORE REALISTIC AND
POSITIVE THAN THOSE HELD BY THEIR DIE-HARD ASSOCIATES AND
MANY OF THEIR FOLLOWERS. WITHOUT BEING APOLOGISTS FOR
THEM, WE BELIEVE THAT EVEN IN CLOUD-CUCKOO LAND OF INTER-
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FEDAYEEN POLITICS IT IS POSSIBLE TO DISCERN ATTITUDES

THAT ARE DISTINCTLY MORE REASONABLE (IN TERMS OF WHAT SOME FEDAYEEN LEADERS MAY EVENTUALLY BE WILLING TO SETTLE FOR) THAN OTHERS. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE HAVE REPORTED ON VARIOUS PAST OCCASIONS CONCRETE INDICATIONS THAT MOST OF FATAH'S TOP LEADERSHIP WOULD LIKE SOMEHOW TO ASSOCIATE THEMSELVES WITH SETTLEMENT EFFORT IF IT HOLDS OUT SOME PROMISE OF GAINING WIDER RECOGNITION AND RESPECTABILITY FOR FEAYEEN MOVEMENT AND FUTURE PERSONAL ADVANTAGE OF THEMSELVES.

2. FACT THAT KHALAF AND ALL OTHER FEDAYEEN LEADERS INVARIABLY VOICE ATTACHMENT TO LONG-CHERISHED PALESTINIAN GOAL OF CREATING "DEMOCRATIC, SECULAR STATE OF PALESTINE- (WHICH IS OF COURSE EUPHEMISM OF DISAPPEARANCE OF ZIONIST STATE OF ISRAEL) DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THEY REGARD IT AS PRACTICAL POSSIBILITY IN EITHER SHORT OR LONG TERM. SOME DO (GEORGE HABASH FOR EXAMPLE, WHO--FOR ALL HIS EVIL WAYS--IS AT LAST A CONSISTENT, DYED-IN-THE-WOOL REVOLUTIONARY). FOR OTHERS, LIKE 'ARAFAT AND KHALAF, IT SIMPLY REFLECTS AWARENESS THAT SUCH CONCEPTS AS FEDAYEEN ASSOCIATION WITH SETTLEMENT EFFORT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF "RUMP" PALESTINIAN STATE IN WEST BANK/GAZA CANNOT BE SOLD TO FEDAYEEN RANK AND FILE AND PALESTINIAN "MASSES" WHO FOR PAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS HAVE NURTURED MYTHS OF RETURN" AND "LIBERATION" UNLESS THEY ARE PRESENTED IN TERMS CONSISTENT WITH THOSE UNREALISTIC, BUT DEEPLY ROOTED, ASPIRATIONS--E.G., AS TACTICAL MANEUVER TO OBSTRUCT RETURN OF OCCUPIED TERRITORY TO JORDANIAN CONTROL OR AS STEPPING-STONE TOWARD "LIBERATION OF ENTIRE PALESTINIAN HOMELAND". OCCURS TO US THAT PRIMEIR MEIR'S RECENT REFERENCE TO GOLAN HEIGHTS AS "INSEPARABLE" PART OF ISRAEL (TEL AVIV 781), ALTHOUGH IT PROBABLY AN ACCURATE REFLECTION OF HER VIEWS, WAS INFLUENCED BY NATURE OF HER AUDIENCE IN SOMEWHAT ANALOGOUS FASHION.

3. PUT ANOTHER WAY, KHALAF'S "MODERATION" MEANS SIMPLY THAT HE IS SHREWED ENOUGH TO RECOGNIZE THAT AS LONG AS TREND TOWARD PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT CONTINUES, FUTURE OF FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT WILL BE DETERMINED NOT SO MUCH BY WHAT FEDAYEEN ARE CAPABLE OF DOING AS BY WHAT WILL

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BE IMPOSED UPON THEM BY EXTERNAL FORCES OVER WHICH THEY HAVE LITTLE CONTROL. TO EXTENT THAT KHALAF AND OTHER FEDAYEEN LEADERS HAVE DECIDED TO GO ALONG WITH SETTLEMENT EFFORT IN HOPE OF OBTAINING WHATEVER CAN REALISTICALLY BE SALVAGED IN WAY OF PALESTINIAN NATIONALIST ASPIRATIONS, WE BELIEVE THEY CAN BE FAIRLY LABELLED AS "MODERATES". AT SAME TIME, WE SHOULD NOTE THAT KHALAF'S KUWAIT SPEECH (KIUSAIT 556) WAS CONSIDERABLY LESS "MODERATE"

THAN WHAT HE HAS BEEN SAYING ELSEWHERE IN RECENT WEEKS.
HOUGHTON

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