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Department of State **TELEGRAM**

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PROR, IS, XF
SUBJECT: GOI POSTURE RE SETTLEMENTS IN AND RETENTION OF
OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

REFERENCE: STATE 151938; TEL AVIV 3874 AND 3899

1. TEL AVIV REFTELS OUTLINE LATEST ISRAELI STATEMENTS OF INTENT TO EXPAND ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES WHICH HAVE PROMPTED MOUNTING EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN FROM SAUDIS INCLUDING KING FAISAL AS REPORTED IN SEVERAL RECENT JIDDA MESSAGES. EMBASSY WILL RECALL OUR EFFORTS AT END OF 1973 TO SEEK TO HOLD DOWN PRESS ARTICLES IN ISRAEL ABOUT ALLEGED PLANS TO ESTABLISH NEW ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN TERRITORIES. EFFORT WAS HAMPERED BY ABSENCE OF PRESS CENSORSHIP IN ISRAEL ON ANY BUT PURELY MILITARY MATTERS AND ALSO BY STRONG OPPOSITION ON PART OF INDIVIDUAL ISRAELIS IN HIGH PLACES TO ANY WITHDRAWAL FROM TERRITORIES. THESE

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ISRAELIS ARE ABLE TO PLANT AUTHORITATIVE-SOUNDING REPORTS IN PRESS ABOUT ALLEGED SETTLEMENT PLANS.

2. AS EMBASSY KNOWS WE APPROACHED GOI IN NOVEMBER RE PRESS ARTICLE PREDICTING IMMINENT DISCUSSION BY MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE FOR SETTLEMENT IN ADMINISTERED TERRITORIES OF PLAN TO DOUBLE ISRAELI SETTLER POPULATION IN GOLAN HEIGHTS, SAYING WE FELT SUCH STORIES WERE MOST UNHELPFUL TO MIDDLE

FAST PEACE EFFORTS. MRS. MEIR REPLIED THAT SHE TOO CONSIDERED PUBLICITY OF THIS KIND TO BE UNHELPFUL, ALTHOUGH SHE IN PRINCIPLE FAVORED ENLARGING ISRAELI POPULATION IN GOLAN HEIGHTS AS NEEDED FOR SECURITY REASONS. SHE EXPLAINED THAT ZIONIST ORGANIZATION AND NOT GOI ITSELF WAS SOURCE OF PRESS STORY AND WOULD BE HARD TO MUZZLE, SINCE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE DID EXIST AND DID HOLD DISCUSSIONS OF SUCH MATTERS. SHE AGREED TO SEEK TO MUTE SUCH PUBLICITY, AND TO BEST OF OUR RECOLLECTION, NO FURTHER STORIES OF THIS KIND APPEARED IN ISRAELI PRESS FOR ABOUT TWO MONTHS.

3. ON BASIS OF ABOVE EXPERIENCE, WE ARE NOT SANGUINE THAT FURTHER ADMONISHMENT OF GOI ON PUBLICITY ALONE WILL BE EFFECTIVE. NEVERTHELESS, IN VIEW DIFFICULTIES SUCH PUBLICITY GENERATES IN US-ARAB RELATIONS, WE WANT TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT PROBLEM. TO ASSIST OUR REVIEW, WE WOULD LIKE (A) UPDATE OF EMBASSY TEL AVIV'S ASSESSMENT OF LIKELIHOOD GOI WILL PRESS FORWARD WITH PLANS ALONG THESE LINES BETWEEN NOW AND END OF YEAR, AND (B) VIEWS OF EMBASSY TEL AVIV ON WAYS GOI MIGHT BE INDUCED TO TURN OFF PUBLIC COMMENTS ON EXPANDING SETTLEMENTS IN TERRITORIES. RUNDOWN BY EMBASSY TEL AVIV ON ACTUAL ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN TERRITORIES SINCE OCTOBER WAR (ESPECIALLY NEW STARTS) IS ALSO REQUESTED. KISSINGER