

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 00102

RIYADH FOR THE SECRETARY'S ATTENTION

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EG, IS, US
SUBJECT: CALL ON FORMER FONMIN ISMAIL FAHMY

1. PAID NEW YEAR'S CALL YESTERDAY ON FORMER FONMIN FAHMY. ALTHOUGH I HAD TALKED TO HIM ON PHONE SEVERAL TIMES SINCE HIS RESIGNATION, I HAD NOT SEEN HIM. (I HAVE SEEN MUHAMMED RIAD SEVERAL TIMES SINCE HIS RESIGNATION.)

2. FAHMY WAS IN A RELAXED MOOD AND CLAIMED THIS IS FIRST TIME IN TWENTY YEARS THAT HE HAS HAD A VACATION. APART FROM READING AND TALKING TO FRIENDS, HE SEEMS TO BE DOING NOTHING. HE PLANS TO WRITE SOME NEWSPAPER ARTICLES AND "ONE OR TWO BOOKS," BUT ONLY AFTER SADAT'S CURRENT INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN PLAYED OUT.

3. FAHMY SAID THAT, WHILE HE DISAGREES WITH SADAT'S INITIATIVES, HE STILL HAS ADMIRATION FOR THE PRESIDENT. HE DESCRIBED SADAT AS "TRUE EGYPTIAN NATIONALIST." EXPLAINED HIS RESIGNATION IN TERMS OF OPPOSING THE TIMING RATHER THAN THE OBJECTIVE OF SADAT'S TRIP TO JERUSALEM. HE HAD ADVISED THE PRESIDENT THAT SUCH A

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TRIP SHOULD BE MADE AFTER BASIC DETAILS OF AN AGREEMENT HAD BEEN WORKED OUT WITH THE ISRAELIS. TO DO SO BEFORE GIVES ISRAELIS MUCH OF WHAT THEY WANT AND GETS NOTHING IN RETURN FOR GOE OR THE ARABS. HIS VIEW, FAHMY ASSERTED, HAS BEEN PROVED CORRECT BY THE "FAILURE" OF THE ISMAILIA MINI-SUMMIT. HE PREDICTED THAT THE CAIRO AND JERUSALEM MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETINGS WILL BE EQUALLY FRUITLESS.

HE SAW WHOLE EXERCISE AS ONE OF "THEATRICALS" ON SADAT'S PART RATHER THAN SOUND POLITICS.

4. FAHMY STATED THAT PROSPECTS FOR EARLY RECONVENING OF GENEVA HAD BEEN DESTROYED BY SADAT'S JERUSALEM TRIP. THIS WAS A TRAGEDY, SINCE A RECONVENING OF GENEVA HAD BEEN IMMINENT. GOE, HE CLAIMED, HAD SHORTLY BEFORE SADAT'S TRIP SENT WORD TO ASSAD, THROUGH THE SAUDIS AND HUSSEIN, THAT IT WAS WILLING TO GO TO GENEVA EVEN ON THE BASIS OF THE TOPICAL COMMITTEES DESIRED BY THE SYRIANS. THIS PROMISED TO REUNIFY ARAB RANKS AND MAKE POSSIBLE A UNITED ARAB DELEGATION.

5. I REMINDED FAHMY THAT SO FAR AS I WAS AWARE, HE HAD NEVER TOLD US OF THIS SHIFT IN EGYPTIAN POLICY. NOR HAD PRESIDENT SADAT. AS HE KNEW, IT WAS NOT ONLY ARAB/ ISRAELI HAGGLING OVER PROCEDURES, BUT ALSO SIMILAR INTER-ARAB DISAGREEMENTS THAT PROMPTED SADAT TO TAKE HIS BOLD INITIATIVES. AS HE ALSO KNEW, WE HAD NOT BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR SADAT'S INITIATIVES BUT FULLY SUPPORT THEM. WE UNDERSTAND THEY ARE AIMED AT ACHIEVING A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT AND ULTIMATELY A RECONVENING OF GENEVA. FAHMY WAS AWARE THAT WE SUPPORT SADAT'S INITIATIVES, BUT NOTED THAT WE HAVE LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO DO SO.

6. FAHMY DEPLORED DISARRAY IN ARAB WORLD WHICH HAD
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RESULTED FROM SADAT'S INITIATIVES. HE MODESTLY CLAIMED THAT ALL ARABS DISTRUST ALL EGYPTIANS EXCEPT HIM. HE CLAIMED THAT IF HE WERE STILL IN OFFICE, ONLY HE COULD PUT THE PIECES TOGETHER AGAIN. AT SAME TIME HE DISCLAIMED ANY DESIRE TO RETURN TO OFFICE. HE SAID SADAT HAD RECENTLY SENT OSMAN AHMED OSMAN TO TALK TO HIM AND THOUGHT THIS MEANT THE PRESIDENT IS LOOKING FOR WAYS TO EFFECT A RECONCILIATION. HE SCOFFED AT COMPETENCE OF NEW FONMIN MOHAMMED IBRAHIM KAMEL.

7. FAHMY SAID SOME WAY MUST BE FOUND TO GET BACK TO GENEVA, ALTHOUGH DOING SO VERY DIFFICULT. THIS HE SAW AS PRIMARY USG MISSION AT THE MOMENT. IN ORDER TO DO SO, HE THOUGHT WE OUGHT TO URGE SADAT AND THE ISRAELIS TO DELAY THE UPCOMING CAIRO AND JERUSALEM MEETINGS AND TRY TO SHIFT THEM TO ANOTHER VENUE. THIS WOULD ENABLE THE SAUDIS TO WORK FOR A DETENTE BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA. AN ARAB SUMMIT PROBABLY NECESSARY BEFORE GENEVA CAN BE RECONVENED.

8. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH FAHMY CLAIMED TO BE ENJOYING HIS LEISURE, I GAINED IMPRESSION THAT HE IS BORED. HE HAS

LOST NONE OF HIS ACERBITY. HIS RECONSTRUCTION OF THE
EVENTS JUST PRIOR TO SADAT'S TRIP TO JERUSALEM IS SELF-
SERVING. I HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE THAT EITHER SADAT OR
BEGIN WOULD WANT TO DELAY THE JERUSALEM/CAIRO MEETINGS.
JUST SO THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING, I INTEND TO TELL
SADAT THAT I PAID NEW YEAR'S CALL ON FAHMY AS A FRIEND
WHO HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL TO ME DURING MY SERVICE IN
EGYPT. EILTS

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