



ARAB INFORMATION CENTER

1875 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 1110
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20009

TELEPHONE: (202) 265-3210
CABLE ADDRESS: ALNASR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 1975

STATEMENT BY:

Dr. Clovis Maksoud
Special Envoy of the League of Arab States

The Senators who have sent a letter to President Ford this morning have in fact signed a document that is tantamount to requesting the U.S. to give Israel a blank check for continual procrastination in complying with all the UN resolutions pertaining to the Middle East conflict and in refusing to implement the operative articles of the Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The letter also states that a settlement should be 'based on secure and recognized boundaries' and adds 'that are defensible'. This addition means that the Senators want the US government to reverse its commitment, as spelled out by Ambassador Aurthur Golberg in Nov. 1967. Why are these words 'that are defensible' be added? Our interpretation is that 'secure' boundaries must be conceived as spelled out by the international consensus and the UN. The addition of 'that are defensible' is a deliberate ploy to enable Israel total immunity from the imperatives of her acquiescing to what the world community, including the US, has conceived as secure boundaries. In other words, what the signatories of the letter are saying is that the words 'defensible borders' are a cover for Israel



ARAB INFORMATION CENTER

1875 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 1110
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20009

TELEPHONE: (202) 265-3210
CABLE ADDRESS: ALNASR

to maintain its occupation over Arab territories it deems suitable for it to hold. This is surprising to us especially as many of those who have signed and who have recently visited the region are on record asking that Israel should withdraw from all the Arab occupied territories.

Furthermore the notion of America needing 'reliable allies' on the basis that a 'strong Israel constitutes a most reliable barrier' (against the Soviet Union), is an indication of an attempt to give life to the obsolete rhetoric of cold war language of the early 1950's rather than exploring new avenues to improve the chances of 'detente'. Yet the signatories of the letter invoke the recent experiences of Southeast Asia and apparently are oblivious to the fact that all regimes, entities, structures imposed against the will and legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the region cannot be sustained or upheld by a policy of open ended military and financial aid.

That the signatories of the letter should pay Israel the compliment of sharing with it 'the traditions of democracy' calls for utter amazement upon any scrutiny of facts and values. By which political dictionary can a state be called 'democratic' if it bars citizenship rights to any person who does not belong to a particular religious faith? What sort of democracy is that which entitles one particular set of citizens to enjoy the institutions of 'democracy' and denies them to the rest? If the signatories are insistent on this definition of 'democratic traditions' then it follows that South Africa

and Rhodesia are included in this definition.

Although we do not intend to polemicize on the questionable assumptions, I should make the following points:

- a. This letter coming as it does on the eve of President Ford's forthcoming meeting with President Sadat constitutes an attempt to forestall any objective outcome of the reassessment process. It seeks to tie the hands of the U.S. in seeking to strengthen its credibility with the Arab states;
- b. This letter tends to exonerate Israel from its role in the breakdown of the Kissinger mission;
- c. If the contents of the letter become policy, then this will mean an attempt to buy further time for Israel so that no meaningful steps are undertaken before 1976 at which time the election year would be taken as the opportunity for Israel to establish new facts, new settlements at precisely the moment when Egypt is opening the Suez Canal, building the cities and rehabilitating the area, besides the fact that Syria has extended the period of the U.N. observers for the next six months.
- d. The contents of this letter are intended to restrict the options of the U.S. to one, namely, the unconditional underwriting of Israeli conquests, instead of confirming, as has been reassured, the U.S. underwriting only of Israeli existence.
- e. Our reading of the last sentence of the letter, "The U.S. acting in its own national interest stands firmly with Israel in the search for peace in future negotiations..." leads us to believe that the signatories of the letter seek to pre-empt any further U.S. role as a mediator having the capacity to lend its "good offices" in the future difficult and complex period. What they are affirming is the need to embolden Israel further in its contempt and defiance for the world community.

We are hopeful that this hurried signing which took place will result in second thoughts by at least those who visited our countries and are capable of a more studied judgement.