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# SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

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Bureau Circular No. B9/82

July 29 1982

To Bureau members

19 AUG 1982

Dear comrades,

REPORT BY MARIO SOARES ON THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL  
MISSION TO THE MIDDLE EAST, JUNE 26 - JULY 8, 1982

Attached please find for information the report by Mario Soares on the Socialist International Mission to the Middle East.

The report is sent to you at the request of Willy Brandt.

Fraternally yours,

*Bernt Carlsson*

Bernt Carlsson

General Secretary

**REPORT BY MARIO SOARES ON THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL MISSION  
TO THE MIDDLE EAST, JUNE 28 - JULY 8, 1982**

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1. Participation - the Members of the Delegation of the Socialist International to the Middle East were: Mário Soares, Bernt Carlsson, Robin Sears and Rui Mateus. Robin Sears was only on the delegation until Greece and Bernt Carlsson until Egypt.
2. Purpose - The priorities were established by the President of the Socialist International, Willy Brandt, responsible for this initiative; they were:
  1. To express the Socialist International concern in relation to the situation created;
  2. To investigate on future prospects for the region;
  3. To inquire on the fate of Walid Jumblat, leader of the Progressive Socialist Party of Lebanon.

Prior to the departure of the Delegation, Willy Brandt made a public statement in the name of the Socialist International, emphasizing the:

1. Condemnation of Lebanon's invasion by Israel, as a threat to Peace;
2. Condemnation of terrorist actions aimed at Israeli Diplomats but also of "State terrorism";
3. Concern over the lack of respect shown towards the United Nations Peace Forces;
4. Respect of the Socialist International towards the territorial integrity of Lebanon, under the terms of the Resolution approved by the "Bureau

of the S.I." on the 27th of May 1982, where the "safeguard of unity and independence in Lebanon" is vindicated;

5. The need for a "cease fire", bearing in mind the plea of the Security Council of the United Nations as a means of preventing a total "crushing" of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization).
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3. Extent of the trip - The Delegation first travelled to Israel, arriving at Tel-Aviv on the 28th of June, 1982. Welcome by Shimon Peres, it held talks with the Direction of the Labour Party and met its top leaders, Through the L.P. it was able to establish contacts with:
    - a) Leaders of MAPAM, Shem Tov, Dov Zachin and Diz Feder;
    - b) The Mayor of Bethlehem, Elias Freij;
    - c) Certain Members of the Israelian Government: Prime-Minister Begin, Minister of Defense Sharon and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Shamir;
    - d) The President of Knesset, after witnessing a very lively Parliamentary debate between Sharon and Shimon Peres.

The Delegation also visited the Kibutz Gesmer Azin and the Municipal district of Naaria, in the northern part of Israel, where it was able to witness the effects of some bombing launched from Lebanon.

On the 1st and the 2nd of July, the Delegation visited the con-

...flict area of Lebanon, in an Israelia Armed Forces helicopter, accompanied by Michael Harish, of the Israelian Labour Party. The Delegation was also in the vicinity of Tiro, and visited Sydon, Damour and Beaufort being prevented from proceeding to Beirut where, as it was told, "conditions were not favourable".

With the intent of meeting Walid Jumblat, the Delegation visited his home at Mouktara, on the hilly part of Lebanon. However, the Leader of the Progressive Socialist Party was not in. Meantime, he had private talks with two Members of the "political bureau" of the Party: Anwar Fatayri and Ziad Bitar.

In conflict area of Lebanon the Delegation was able to witness the destruction caused by the war, particularly in Sydon and Damour, and had contacts with the Lebanese population in the places that were visited. It also visited a "bunker", where a significant amount of sophisticated war materials had been confiscated (source: Tripoli, Libia) and proceeded to a United Nations school for technical training, utilized by the PLO, where it carried out private talks with the latter's Lebanese Palestinian Director, Farid Assi.

On the 3rd and the 4th of July, the Delegation went to Greece for meetings with Prime-Minister Papandreu, and in order to proceed from there to Syria, in the hope to eventually reach Beirut by sea, via Cyprus.

From Athens, Walid Jumblat was contacted by telephone, at his present place of residence, the Hotel Cavalier, in Western Beirut. Jumblat transmitted to Mário Soares, the following message:

1. The need to maintain "the cease fire", at all costs;

2. The need for international military forces (preferably French) to reach Lebanon;
3. Considered as "acquired" the principle of the withdrawal of the PLO from Beirut;
4. Expressed "great concern" on possible and future retaliation of the Phalange against the Druze;
5. Made it known that the "siege" on West Beirut was "total" and that he, considered himself a "prisoner";
6. Expressed great concern on the fate of the Palestinian prisoners "numbering at least seven thousand";
7. Declared himself in favour of the "internationalization of the conflict", as the only way of saving the lives of the people and promoting their safety in Lebanon.

Still in Greece, by the good offices of Papandreu's Diplomatic Advisor Christos Machaeritsos, the Delegation received the Representative of the PLO in Athens, Shawki Armali. The latter was the bearer of a personal message from Arafat to Mário Soares which simply read as follows: Quote "I beg you to come to Beirut". For the Delegation, however, the main difficulty resided in reaching the capital, since the route through Israel, considered from the beginning as the most practicable, remained inoperative. The alternative ones, by sea via Cyprus, or by land departing from Syria, eventually proved to be inadequate.

It is only fair to point out that the Greek Prime-Minister, A. Papandreu, was of great help to the Delegation, not only by expressing his points of view, but also by arranging contacts and instructing the Greek Ambassadors in Syria and Jordan to arrange ne-

cessary meetings.

On the 4th, the 5th and the 6th of July the Delegation visited Damascus in Syria, where contacts were established with:

- a) Leaders of the Baath Party: Abdullah' Al-Ahmar, Vice-President of the Party; Farouk Al Shara, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs; and Nasser Kaddour, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- b) Representatives of the PLO in Damascus: Khaled Fahroum, President of the Palestinian National Council; Mohamed Z. Nashashibi, Member of the Executive Secretariat; and Abdel Abu Maizer, spokesman for the PLO;
- c) President Hafed Al Assad, with whom the Delegation had a long meeting (exceeding 3 hours), immediately after his return from Saudi Arabia.

Still on the 6th, the Delegation departed to Amman in Jordan, on a plane that was made available to Mário Soares by President Assad. Jordan's Foreign Minister, Marwan El Qasem Bid the Delegation welcome.

On the 7th and 8th of July, the Delegation visited Egypt (Cairo) having met:

- a) The Vice-President of the National Democratic Party, and the former Prime-Minister, Mustafa khalil;
- b) The Prime-Minister and General Secretary of the Party, Fouad Moheidine;

- c) The Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Kamal Hassan Ali.

The President, Moubarak, absent from Cairo, could only receive the Delegation of the S.I. on the 11th (Sunday morning). However, the latter was scheduled to return on the dawn of the 9th to meet the President of the Socialist International, Willy Brandt, in Bonn, and report the outcome of the mission.

4. Some points of interest:

1. The Delegation was received everywhere, at top level, with obvious demonstrations of kindness and appreciation. This clearly demonstrates that the S. I. is considered by all concerned as an eligible interlocutor. On some occasions too high expectations were placed on the possibilities of effective intervention by the S.I.
2. The Delegation regretted the frustrating impediment to reach West Beirut, which prevented essential meetings with Yasser Arafat, Members of the Lebanese Government, especially President Sarkis and the Prime-Minister Wazzan and with Walid Jumblat, with whom views could only be exchanged through the telephone. Due to the "seige" on the city, it was only possible to arrive in Beirut through Israel, and only with the latter's authorization.
3. Throughout its itinerary, the Delegation tried to sustain a "low profile", avoiding not only public and embarrassing statements, but also controversies with the various par-

ties with which it interacted. It was above all a mission for informative purpose and for the establishment of contacts with the two member parties of the S. I. situated in the region, thus allowing no other course of behaviour. The S.I. demonstrated great concern in keeping open all viabilities of dialogue, as the most efficient way of assuming a useful and practical position in such a disturbed area.

4. It was acknowledged that the operation given the name of "peace in Galilee", beyond the negative aspects that it entails politically and, above all, on the humanitarian side, has altered the balance of forces in the Middle East. Thus, it:

- put in evidence the crushing superiority of the Israelian army;
- neutralized, or even destroyed, at least temporarily, the PLO as a military organization or one of terrorist action, emphasizing the divisions of the PLO as a political force;
- demonstrated the incapacity for response in the field of the Syrian military forces, stressing the political difficulties between the Syrians and Lebanese;
- emphasized the deep religious and political divisions existant in Lebanon, the inability and lack of representativity of its Government, and the apparent non-existence of its armed forces;
- Led to the confiscation of substancial quan-



titles of war materials and of important files on the activities of trained terrorists originating from Lebanon;

- Imposed much destruction, numerous dead and wounded, and all kinds of suffering which are not only far from being over but will also undoubtedly leave a lot of frustration and unpredictable consequences in all of the Arab World, for an extended period of time.

5. The timing for the "operation" seems to have been perfect for Israel. Thus, the Israelian Leaders, in a rather triumphant way, refer to what they call the "four surprises" of War:

first surprise: a certain "green light" from Washington, even in spite of Haig's resignation. The "moderate" Arab countries, due to reasons that might have to do with the Iran/Iraq conflict, and with the growing fear of the "Arab fundamentalism", were not in a position to impose sufficient pressure on the United States.

second surprise: extremely careful reaction from the Soviet Union. Why? Some probabilities are put forth.

third surprise: inability of the Arab World to react efficiently, due to its profound divisions that can be witnessed even inside the PLO.

fourth surprise: inadequate military response, as much from the part of the PLO as from the Syrian forces stationed in the Lebanon, in flagrant contrast with the numerous arsenals of armament therein stored.

6. The situation emanating from this, no matter how dramatic it presents itself, would be taken advantage of, to reach a new political arrangement, capable of offering the region some political stability. In Israel and Egypt, though for different purpose, the advantages of encouraging the spirit of "Camp David", were stressed as the only possible way to be undertaken in order to achieve a lasting solution. On the contrary, in Syria, it was pointed out that the whole tragedy came about as a result of the "Camp David" agreements which allowed Israel a free hand to attack Lebanon. In different areas the "principle of double recognition" is now mentioned, as referred to by the Mayor of Bethlehem, Elias Freij, who said: "There is need for an Israelian Sadat", and also supported by men like Mendés-France, Goldmann and Klutznick - without which it will not be possible to think seriously of a negociable political solution, which naturally has to include the West Bank and Gaza.
7. Bearing in mind the complex negotiations of Beirut, it now seems clear any solution must follow four steps:
- a) withdrawl of the PLO from Beirut;
  - b) Formation of a Lebanese Government which is stable and has credibility;
  - c) withdrawl of all foreign troops from Lebanon: Palestinians, Syrians and Israelians.

Such a plan undoubtedly entails great difficulties, as were referred to the Delegation of the Socialist Inter

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national throughout, although each expressing opposing and controversial outlooks. Where would the soldiers of the PLO and their families go to if they agreed to leave Beirut? What would be the fate of the prisoners of war? How to establish in Lebanon - an occupied and profoundly divided country - a Government with internal authority and external credibility?

In Egypt, it is considered as preliminary condition that all the militias should be disarmed. It is not foreseen that the Presidential elections coming up on the 23rd in the Lebanese Republic may have a positive effect. On the other hand, Israel does not recognise a multinational body from the United Nations. As far as the withdrawal of "foreign troops" is concerned, Syria does not accept that its troops should be catalogued as "foreign" in Lebanon, since they consider themselves "part of the same people" and they were sent there by recommendation of the League of Arab Nations.

8. The S.I. necessarily had to concern itself with the situation of the two Members Parties in the region, and tried to carry out a constructive dialogue with both.

- a) It was recognised that the Labour Party is in a very difficult position, facing a domestic public opinion strongly conditioned by the war and severe external criticism, even from the area of democratic socialism, that does not fail to be negatively taken advantage of by Begin.

The Israelian Labour Party is a party with a great historical tradition, in favour of de-

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mocratic socialism, and as such, should be supported. However, it is important to point out in political terms, the factors that distinguish its politics from that envisaged by Begin. On the other hand, the internal opposition to Begin's Government is today one of the most important factors contributing to the prevention of Israelian expansion and to the forcing of a negotiated political solution.

- b) The Lebanese Progressive Socialist Party, has a confined regional and religious foundation, and is strongly in favour of its leader, Walid Jumblat's charisma. At present, it is extremely important to maintain contact, in order to defend the Druze of possible retaliation from the Phalange after the removal of foreign troops from Lebanon.

## 5. Concluding:

The Socialist International must follow closely the events in Lebanon as well as the rest of the Middle East - where the situation is in a constant mutation, and greatly affecting World Peace. The Socialist International - as stressed earlier, benefits from easy interaction with all the involved parties being recognised by all as a useful and welcome interlocutor. We should therefore, as from now, start preparing a new mission with a wide representation of Parties, having negotiated primarily a visit to Beirut, and direct contacts with the Lebanese Government, with Yasser Arafat and with Walid Jumblat. The presence of the Socialist International in the region, in the crucial moment that we

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are witnessing, seems important, and may lead to the search of a negotiated solution, avoiding further deterioration of the conflict.

On the other hand, it is fundamental for the future, and the credibility of Democratic Socialism in the World.

Lisbon, the 11th of July, 1982