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Department of State

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OUTGOING

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ORIGIN NODS-00

C05/05 002724 NOD441

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00
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DRAFTED BY: NEA/IAI: KLOKEN
APPROVED BY: NEA: RWMURPHY
NEA/IAI: PWILCOX
L: MKOZAK
S/S: JCOLLINS
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NEA: RHPELLETREAU
S: CHILL
S/S-O: RPACE

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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, IS, LE, US
SUBJECT: ATLIT PRISONERS

REF: A) STATE 200336; B) STATE 200321

1. ~~SECRET~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. INITIAL REACTION FROM NOVIK SUGGESTS THAT THE GOI MAY BE WILLING TO CONSIDER THE SUGGESTION THAT ATLIT DETAINEES BE RELEASED DIRECTLY TO THE SYRIANS ON THE GOLAN RATHER THAN ACROSS THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER WITH LEBANON. WE WILL NEED TO RESPOND SHORTLY TO THE SYRIANS AND THEREFORE HOPE TO RECEIVE ISRAELI VIEWS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

3. YOU SHOULD CLARIFY TO THE GOI THAT THIS PROPOSAL CAME ORIGINALLY FROM THE LEBANESE, NOT THE SYRIANS. AND WAS

BY CLS NARA, DATE 2/6/03
DECLASSIFIED
NLS 197-1091 #133



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SAID TO BE BASED ON SECURITY CONCERNS. ALSO, OUR LEGAL REVIEW HAS DETERMINED THAT THE GENEVA CONVENTION WOULD NOT PROHIBIT A TRANSFER OF THE DETAINEES THROUGH SYRIA. THE CONVENTION ADDRESSES THE END RESULT -- RETURN TO LEBANON - BUT NOT THE MEANS OF TRANSFER. SHULTZ