

July 6, 1999  
כ"ב תמוז, תשנ"ט

Mr. Martin Peretz  
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Fax: 617-864-4416

Dear Sir,

As one who had first-hand knowledge of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's contacts with Syria, and who as Cabinet Secretary personally took part in these proceedings, I wish to correct several points made by Mr. Daniel Pipes.

Contrary to the assertion in the article, Prime Minister Netanyahu never agreed to an Israeli withdrawal to the June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1967 lines. No agreement was reached between Jerusalem and Damascus, first and foremost because Mr. Netanyahu refused to present the Syrians with a map that would indicate an Israeli withdrawal to the June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1967 lines. Furthermore, no timetable was established for an Israeli withdrawal in the Golan Heights, if and when an agreement is reached.

On the subject of demilitarized zones and zones with limitations on forces and weapons some progress was made, but here too, no final arrangement was reached. Contrary to another assertion in the article, there was no Israeli consent to a demilitarized zone of only 10 km in width. In fact, Mr. Netanyahu insisted on much wider demilitarized zones and wider zones with limitations on forces and weapons. In light of the Prime Minister's rejection of the June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1967 lines, the Syrians declined to present a map outlining their demilitarized zones and zones with limitations on forces and weapons.

On the matter of early-warning stations, real progress was made. Contrary to their previous position, the Syrians showed a willingness to refrain from the immediate demolition of the early-warning stations, primarily of the Hermon station. They agreed that the stations would be operated by American and French international forces, and gave their tacit consent to an Israeli team that would operate the installations under an American aegis.

It was Mr. Netanyahu's refusal to accept the Syrian offer to withdraw to the 1967 lines, as well as the Syrian refusal to delineate satisfactory demilitarized and force separation zones, that prevented an Israel-Syria agreement.

Sincerely,

D. M...l