BOARD OF INQUIRY SET TO

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never been involved in politics. Barak, 46, has served as Attorney General under Labor and Likud led governments and also played a key role in the Camp David negotiations of September, 1978 as a legal advisor to the Israeli negotiating team.

Earlier, the Cabinet decided unanimously to establish this judicial commission to conduct a formal inquiry into the circumstances of the massacre. The Cabinet statement announcing the decision said it was taking this action "in order to put an end to the false libels to the effect that the Israeli government had something to hide in this matter or that it would like to avoid its full clarification." The statement, read to reporters by Cabinet secretary Dan Meridor, said: "The matter which will be suggested to inquiry is all the facts and persons connected with the atrocity which was carried out by a unit of the Lebanese forces against the civilian populations" in the refugee camps.

The Cabinet's decision culminated a 10-day period, from the original tragedy at the camps on September 16 - 17 to the Cabinet decision, it which it was widely perceived that Premier Menachem Begin was seeking such avoidance. But according to the statement by the Cabinet, Begin himself proposed the judicial commission and it was then unanimously approved. In fact, Begin told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee that he regarded himself, as Premier, fully responsible for any negligence or wrongdoing that might have happened in connection with the Beirut massacre. He said he accepted such responsibility even though he heard of the events at the refugee camps only after it was broadcast in a BBC World Service broadcast.

Earlier, Begin himself sent a special emissary to Supreme Court President Yitzhak Kahan with a formal letter informing him of the Cabinet decision to set up the commission of inquiry.

The Cabinet, as required by law is called upon to establish the commission's terms of reference, and Meridor added that it had been done so in very broad terms when it said the commission would be asked to inquire into "all facts and factors (i.e. instutions and individuals) related to the atrocity." Most observers agreed. Meridor said the commission itself was implicitly empowered to decide what or who was "related" to the massacre and whether to investigate it or them. It was considered "probable and reasonable" that the commission would include within its ambit the Cabinet meeting of the night of September 16, when the Ministers were informed that units of Israel's allied Christian Phalangists were about to enter the refugee camps.

The Cabinet placed no time limit on the inquiry and there was no estimate as to how long it might take. Observers believe that given the limited and specific nature of the episode, the commission whould not need more than a few weeks to sift through the material. The Cabinet also left it up to the commission to decide whether to deliberate in secret or otherwise. This obviously was to indicate that the government does not seek to have the sessions concealed from the public. It is expected here that the commission will decide to hold most of the meetings behind closed doors because the material under investigation is by its nature security sensitive. But the conclusions and recommendations are expected to be made public, though not necessarily all of the findings.

The Cabinet's action represented the second reversal by the government on the issue of an inquiry in little more than a week. On September 21, the Cabinet refused to take any action despite mounting calls in Israel and abroad for a judicial inquiry. Begin was adamantly opposed on grounds that to launch a full dress probe would be tantamount to admitting Israeli responsibility for the massacre. On September 22, the Knesset voted 48 - 42 against a Labor motion for an official inquiry.

But Begin relented somewhat September 28 when he asked Kahan to head an inquiry into the Beirut massacre. Kahan demurred, explaining that he could not act while there were two applications before the Suprem Court -- from outside the government -- to appoint a State Commission of inquiry. Those applications were for a formal investigation under the 1968 Commissions of Inquiry Law under which the Agranat Committee was established following the Yom Kippur War. Such statutory commissions have full power to subpoena witnesses and documents, hear testimony under oath and protect witnesses from libel actions. The inquiry proposed by Begin last Friday would not have had those powers.

## REAGAN: MARINES TO GIVE "SUPPORT AND STABILITY"

WASH. (WNS) -- President Reagan, answering questions at a nationally televised press conference from the White House said the multinational force consisting of U. S. marines and French and Italian troops which are now in Lebanon for the second time within a month, is designed "to give a kind of support and stability while the Lebanese government seeks to reunite its people ... and bring about a unified Lebanon with a Lebanese army which will then be able to preserve order in its own country."

The President said while this is going on, he is "optimistic" that the Israeli and Syrian armies will leave Lebanon "as quickly as

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