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THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

June 11, 1982

TO: Carl Smith

Attached is the Executive Summary of the paper on Elements of U.S. Strategy in Lebanon that went to Judge Clark last night. The paper was characterized as a preliminary think piece, produced through the interagency process but not approved by the SSG. Bud told the Secretary we would send it over.

Office of the Secretary of Defense

Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS

Date: 27 Jul 2018 Authority: EO 13526

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John Poindexter

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are a number of policy questions outlined in the attached paper which deserve our careful consideration in the days ahead. The Department of Defense has included its views at the end of this summary.

Our approach is premised on the basic assumption that we should seek Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon as rapidly as possible. The thrust of our recommendations are designed to accomplish this objective in a realistic way, given the new circumstances that pertain in Lebanon. While we may be at conflict with Israel on a number of different points, nevertheless, our approach, in general, is fully consistent with the stated aims of Israeli policy.

First, we have recommended a continuation of our policy which makes Israeli withdrawal conditional on arrangements to protect the northern border of Israel, i.e., the stated Israeli objective. We do not want to return to the status quo ante and then have to face another Israeli invasion in three months. Our strategic interests and the peace process cannot absorb another shock like this.

If we are to secure Israel's northern border, we must consider what kind of peacekeeping force could be interposed to accomplish this. There are three recommendations: an indigenous force, an expanded UNIFIL, and an international force along the lines of the MFO. Our preference is an expanded UNIFIL. This will be very difficult to achieve, and therefore we have to think of a fallback to an MFO type force, or an indigenous force.

An indigenous force acceptable to Israel would be interpreted as being under Israeli control and would have insufficient legitimacy in the eyes of others. Nevertheless, there may be a combined option of indigenous forces and a UNIFIL or MFO type of force.

The third question raised is whether the U.S. should participate in such a force. The paper outlines the pros and cons for this course and indicates that the cons may outweigh the pros if we are speaking of U.S. combat forces. Nevertheless, there is a range of options open to us for U.S.

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participation if this becomes politically advisable and feasible. We can, for example, provide support functions or provide a Sinai Field Mission type of civilian unit for technical monitoring. This is a decision that need not, and should not, be made now, until we know the circumstances that evolve from our discussions of a peacekeeping force.

A fourth policy question is whether or not to couple our efforts to obtain Israeli withdrawal with efforts to resolve larger political problems of Lebanon. We recommend that we do so. It is our view that even with Israeli withdrawal and a peacekeeping force in place, continued instability in northern Lebanon will impact adversely on the southern solution. We feel there are opportunities in the present situation which we could take advantage of, if possible, and that the costs of failure are minimal. We suggest that to be effective such an effort must have international backing.

The last question relates to the peace process. It will be all but impossible to continue progress in the autonomy talks until Israel withdraws, or at least the framework for an agreement on withdrawal is reached. We suggest that we need to think further about how we should use the time now productively, if at all possible, in the direction of implementing the Camp David Accords, and we are preparing an options paper on this subject.

Finally, we feel we should continue to exclude the Soviets from active participation in our diplomatic efforts and negotiations following a ceasefire.

Clearly, the military situation is evolving and the longer the fighting continues the more difficult it will be to achieve some of the options we have suggested.

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ADDENDUM

Defense sought a footnote to explain it did not wish to dissent from this paper so much as to raise for the consideration of the President three fundamental issues:

(1) The paper seems to identify U.S. objectives with those of Israel, with no analysis or rationale, and in particular accepts the Israeli view that their withdrawal must not be unconditional, as called for in Resolution 509 (which we voted for) but must be conditional on the creation of a new regime for all Lebanon and its southern regions. This regime could

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prove to be a costly and difficult and even impossible new USG undertaking on behalf of Israel, particularly in light of reactions elsewhere in the Arab world, like the Gulf, where security cooperation with us could be harmed.

(2) DOD believes the paper as drafted is too optimistic about our influence and opportunities and does not give the President a realistic picture of the dangers. In this regard, there is a critical omission in the issue of the PLO and its future role, even though this issue and the Palestinian problem in general is at the heart of the problem?

(3) DOD cannot endorse a U.S. role in a peacekeeping force for Lebanon, at least as outlined in this paper. Such a force is not comparable to the one we developed for the Sinai. There we had a prior peace agreement, two strong and stable governments in support of our presence, and an area of responsibility with few inhabitants who threaten the force. None of these conditions prevail in South Lebanon where U.S. servicemen will probably be killed.

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