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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

I-23540/83
20 JUL 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Through: Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

SUBJECT: National Security Planning Group Meeting on Lebanon,
20 July 1983, 1400 Hours (U) -- INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

1. This NSPG meeting is being convened to consider again the issues addressed at the 15 July NSPG meeting, in order that US positions are decided prior to the visit of President Gemayel on the following points related to Lebanon:

- Whether to support Israel's plan for a "redeployment", or partial withdrawal, of its forces to the Awali River;
- Whether to support implementation of the Israeli-Lebanese Agreement under the partial withdrawal scenario; and
- Whether to increase the size and/or role of US forces in the Multinational Force in support of the Lebanese Army as it deploys to the area vacated by the Israeli forces.

2. The interagency memorandum at Tab A, prepared for the 15 July NSPG meeting, remains a valid analysis of the above three issues. Since President Gemayel may present new requests for additional military equipment items for the Lebanese Army, you will be asked to address this subject. Specifically, should the Lebanese request another battalion of M-48 tanks, we should make no commitment, since they would be unavailable except through removal (without replacement) from US Army and National Guard units. On any major arms requests from President Gemayel, recommend that we respond by taking the requests under consideration. The Lebanese Army will succeed or fail for political, not military, reasons.

3. As with the 15 July meeting, General Vessey will be prepared to brief specific Multinational Force options. You may wish to preface General Vessey's presentation with some cautionary remarks concerning an expansion of our force commitment in Lebanon under a partial withdrawal scenario.

Office of the Secretary of Defense

Chief, RND, ESD, WHIS

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R. L. Armitage
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TALKING PAPER

SUBJECT: Briefing for NSPG Meeting--Lebanese Requests for More Aid; Role of the MNF

BACKGROUND

As the Agenda indicates, you will be asked to brief the NSPG on two subjects: responding to possible Lebanese requests for more military assistance; and possible roles for the MNF in the event of a partial Israeli withdrawal. General Vessey is prepared to brief the specific MNF options. His briefing is next under.

TALKING POINTS:

Lebanese Requests for More Aid (Program Summary, Tab D)

- The Lebanese Army Modernization Plan (LAMP) has proceeded very smoothly since its inception in November of last year. Training and equipment deliveries have been very satisfactory.
- As a result, our assessment is that the Lebanese Army is militarily capable of asserting sovereign authority in the Shuf and Alay regions. More equipment at this point would not make a difference in the success or failure of the Army in the planned deployment.
- If President Gemayel requests major equipment items during his visit, I recommend that we take the requests under consideration, without making any commitments.
- Acquisition by the Lebanese of major sophisticated weapons such as fighter aircraft, air defense missiles or helicopters should not be encouraged by US. These would divert money and scarce Lebanese trained manpower from the basic military programs required for the Army to maintain internal security. The Lebanese cannot hope to deter the vastly superior Israeli, Syrian and Turkish armed forces across their borders for the foreseeable future, and they should not try.
- If President Gemayel asks for a second battalion of M-48 tanks, we should not encourage him. The US Army gave up the battalion which we already provided to the Lebanese on the understanding that it was a one-time diversion. A new diversion would require a Presidential Directive. The US Army and the National Guard would have to pull the tanks from existing units without replacement. The Lebanese Army, for its part, lacks the trained manpower to maintain a second battalion of tanks. The ammunition for the M-48s is in short supply; we had to divert that which the Lebanese already have. For all of these reasons, the Defense Department does not support the provision of more US tanks to Lebanon. Jordan is providing

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40 M-48s to Lebanon; if the Lebanese are truly anxious for more tanks, they should acquire the French tanks from the (Christian) Lebanese Forces, or buy M-48s which Israel has offered to sell.

Role of the MNF

- We are concerned that the partial pullback scenario envisaged by the Israelis poses serious problems for American troops, if our forces are to be increased or deployed outside of Beirut.
- Israel's proposed redeployment line along the Awali River would split the Druze area. Walid Jumblatt's home town would remain in Israeli-controlled territory, raising Druze fears of attack by Christian militia forces under Israeli protection. The Shuf would remain unsettled.
- As the recent (7/14) Lebanese Army incident with the Druze demonstrators showed, the absence of a political settlement in the Shuf could be very dangerous for the Army, whose cohesion is essential for the country in the long term.
- The proposed US deployment area along the Beirut-Sidon road is, as the Israelis told us last week, "an ideal area for terrorists."
- If US forces are to be placed in this dangerous environment, we must be very clear on why their presence is necessary, and what turn of events we are counting upon to allow us to remove our forces eventually.
- Congressional acquiescence in an open-ended commitment of US combat forces under these circumstances should not be assumed. There is already an effort on Capitol Hill to force the removal of US troops from Lebanon.
- And now, General Vessey will brief the specific MNF options.

(CJCS BRIEFING NEXT UNDER)

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