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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

Office of the Secretary of Defense  
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS  
Date: 20 AUG 2018 Authority: EO 13526 + 5 U.S.C. § 552  
Declassify: X Deny in Full: \_\_\_\_\_  
Declassify in Part: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

I-23353/83

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD: 18-M-1332

SUBJECT: Secretary Weinberger's Meeting With Lebanese President  
Amin Gemayel, 22 Jul 1983, 0830 Hours (U)

PARTICIPANTS

US

Secretary Weinberger  
Deputy Secretary Thayer  
GJCS, General Vessey  
ASD/ISA Armitage  
Ambassador Dillon  
DASD/NESA, MG Tixier  
Dir, DSAA, LTG Gast  
Mil. Asst., MG Powell  
BG Cooley, OJCS  
LTC FitzGerald, ISA/NESA  
Mr. Bloomfield, ISA/NESA

Lebanon

President Gemayel  
Prime Minister Wazzan  
Ambassador Barhabib  
Amb. (UNK), interpreter  
Dr. Wadi Haddad  
DATT, BG Barakat  
LAF Dir, Ops, BG Hamdan

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(S) After Secretary Weinberger greeted President Gemayel and complimented him on his impressive leadership of the Lebanese Government and on the rapid progress of the Lebanese Army to date, President Gemayel expressed his thanks for the Defense Department's support to Lebanon. Gemayel made the following points in his opening remarks:

- Lebanon is one of many places in which DoD supports the Free world.
- The Lebanese Government is grateful for the training and equipment support provided to the Lebanese Army (LAF) by the US. The Bartlett Report, however, is no longer an accurate guide to the army's needs, since the LAF has outpaced the projected recruitment levels and training time required. The army has 32,000 men at present. More equipment is needed for the new recruits.
- Lebanon is grateful for the U.S. contribution to the Multinational Force (MNF). Lebanon wants its own army to be able to do the job required, so that the U.S. forces can depart with their mission accomplished. Without more rifles, tanks, artillery pieces and APCs, the LAF cannot do the job as it would like to.

330-86-0069, 1x1, Lebanon

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- At the US' suggestion, the European countries have helped to equip the LAF, but the Lebanese Government would like to concentrate on U.S. assistance. The LAF prefers U.S. equipment in all categories, from small machine guns to airplanes. The LAF needs help with its helicopters in order to control the mountains.
- The Syrian presence in Lebanon is responsible for much of the shelling of Beirut, such as this morning's (22 July) shelling, which injured three U.S. servicemen. Lebanon cannot afford for this activity to go on for a long time, nor can the U.S., due to the political implications for the area. Syria could become the central power of the region. The Syrians have stopped the Reagan peace initiative, prevented Yasser Arafat from reaching agreement with King Hussein on peace negotiations with Israel, and now they have prevented implementation of the Lebanese-Israeli Agreement. The peace process is endangered.
- Syria is able to shell Beirut at no cost or embarrassment. Especially in light of the Soviets' backing of Syria, if the U.S. does not react, not only will Lebanon be endangered, but so will the entire Middle East, including Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.
- Syria is working to support a Soviet strategy. They control Mount Lebanon and the city of Tripoli. They have given the Soviets a naval base at Latakia. Many Lebanese civilian lives are endangered by the daily artillery shelling.
- "I think Syria needs a clear, direct U.S. message that it can't get away with aggression." A specific, strong message is needed, or a dangerous erosion of the progress in Lebanon could result, and the accomplishment of initial consensus-building could be destroyed.
- All of the factions and political figures in Lebanon agreed to support the Government because they thought it would free the country from external forces and that the U.S. Middle East peace initiative would succeed. But if Lebanese-US cooperation produces nothing, the consensus could be lost.
- An ad hoc US-Lebanese team is needed to study ways to protect Beirut from shelling. Lebanon needs radar to counter this threat. Lebanon also needs surveillance and anti-infiltration equipment to clear areas in advance of Lebanese Army deployment.
- Technical assistance is needed to help the Lebanese respond to Syrian aggression, "to make their occupation uncomfortable behind enemy lines."

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- Lebanon hopes to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of U.S.-Lebanese cooperation, not only by successfully utilizing the training and equipment provided by the U.S., but by serving as an important part of America's strategic efforts in the region.

(S) Secretary Weinberger complemented President Gemayel on his presentation, stressed the value of US-Lebanese cooperation to American interests, indicated his satisfaction with the progress of Lebanese Army recruitment and training, and discussed Gemayel's equipment requests in detail. He said that LOAs for M-16 rifles, ammunition, and APCs will be ready for presentation to the GOL shortly. The Secretary said that the request for more M-48A5 tanks presents a problem for the US. The battalion already provided this year, he said, required him to override the U.S. Army, and to take the tanks from existing U.S. units in the field. He pledged to look at this request carefully and said he would try to help, although results could not be promised. The Secretary said that he understands the need for (counter-mortar/ counter-battery) radars, and "we are working on that." He noted that a team is going to Lebanon soon to survey the Lebanese Air Force, including helicopter and air defense operations. ✓

(S) The Secretary went on to say that technical assistance on how to make the Syrians uncomfortable is a "very high priority," a very important means of trying to get the Syrians out of Lebanon. The Soviet presence in Syria, he said, makes it harder for the Saudis to persuade the Syrians to withdraw, "but this goal is a fundamental part of our policy, as the President will tell you today." Said the Secretary, "We have an agreement between Lebanon and Israel; now we must work on the Syrians."

(S) Regarding the internal Lebanese situation, Secretary Weinberger said that it will be important to have internal cooperation so that there will be no opposition when the LAF deploys (to the Shuf and Alay). The Secretary then said that the Saudis, in particular Prince Sultan, feel it is important that a formal request for withdrawal go from the GOL to Syria. He said that it is important to remove any legal claim for the Syrians to stay. He expressed his understanding for Lebanese reluctance to risk a Syrian refusal, but urged President Gemayel to make the request because "it would clarify the situation: no one could point to a legal basis for the Syrian presence." The Secretary then reiterated his agreement that the Lebanese must make the Syrian presence difficult. Secretary Weinberger concluded his remarks by offering to hear more military details from LAF Director of Operations, BG Hamdan, and said that General Vessey can speak to the military situation regarding a possible Israeli pull back of their forces.

(S) President Gemayel asked that Secretary Weinberger consider his request for tanks an "emergency request." He stated that the U.S. does not face the same threat in California

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as the Lebanese Government does in Beirut. (SecDef: "Sometimes things get pretty tense in California.") President Gemayel said that an internal consensus exists in Lebanon, and "when the LAF deploys, believe me, the people will be with them." The Lebanese Army, he said, will protect people against Syrian and Libyan meddling. Gemayel urged that the U.S. avoid making a publicly-agreed internal consensus a precondition to more support, since the consensus actually exists already. He said that Israel is sending arms and manipulating Druze-Christian fighting. The equipment used to shell Beirut Airport, he said, was Syrian equipment fired from Israeli-controlled territory (as-Shwayfat). Beirut, Gemayel noted, has Druze and Christian peoples, yet no problems, due to the LAF presence.

(S) Secretary Weinberger asked, "If the Israelis pull out of the Shuf, then you anticipate no problems?" President Gemayel replied, "Not even with (Walid) Jumblatt." He recounted that a meeting had taken place recently at the Presidential palace in Baabda, attended by Jumblatt, (rival Druze leader) Aarsalan, Druze militiamen, Pierre Gemayel (Amin's father, founder and head of the Phalange party) and others, at which agreement was arrived at with no problem. Yet, said Gemayel, continued kidnappings and fighting hurts the situation. He suggested that parallel action is required in both seeking withdrawal of external forces and building a national consensus. Regarding the Saudis, President Gemayel said that the GOL had prepared a letter requesting Syria to withdraw, but the Saudis themselves had suggested that a friendly, discreet letter go from Gemayel to Assad instead. This was sent two months ago, and no response has been received from Assad. Gemayel said he is ready to send the formal request.

(S) General Vessey said he agreed with President Gemayel that achieving withdrawal is the first priority. He also agreed that the Bartlett Report is obsolete and that the new situation requires an updated assessment to be arranged with General Tannous, which would address current LAF needs such as stopping the shelling of Beirut. The Chairman said he would work on the equipment requests. President Gemayel urged that both sides' staffs work together urgently. General Vessey expressed his understanding of President Gemayel's concerns. Secretary Weinberger also said he understood the urgency, and said that the new survey could be put together immediately. President Gemayel noted that whereas the Bartlett Report had predicted 5,000 LAF recruits within 12 months, in fact 12,000 new recruits have been brought in within 6 months. Secretary Weinberger said that rifles and APCs are on the way. General Vessey said that "there are ways to solve the other equipment problems." Secretary Weinberger stressed that withdrawal remains a very high Presidential priority.

(S) President Gemayel asked, "If we cannot get radars immediately, can we get help from the Sixth Fleet to help us stop the artillery fire?" Secretary Weinberger replied that counter-battery radars are not exported to anyone, but there are types which could help. General Vessey asked whether President Gemayel could ask

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the militias to turn in their artillery to reduce the shelling of Beirut, in conjunction with the addition of a radar capability in Beirut. President Gemayel replied that this was an "interesting question," but that because the occupiers create the "law of the jungle," it is hard to get the militias to disarm before the official security system can be sent in. Gemayel noted that there have been eight years of civil war, and until the army goes in to these areas, the situation will remain explosive. The militias, he concluded, cannot be disarmed while still under foreign control. General Vessey asked whether, if the U.S. gave the GOL a full counter-artillery capability, and the GOL told the militias it would counter-attack any further shelling, this might allow the government to disarm the militias. President Gemayel replied that such a GOL counter-threat could be made, but the militias would not voluntarily disarm until the LAF controlled their areas. Gemayel concluded the meeting by stressing the urgency of his requests.

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