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OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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19 June 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Lebanon

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: AUG 06 2018

Handwritten: K. J. ...

1. The press continues to report the possibility of President Reagan meeting with Prime Minister Begin on Monday. If there is any prospect of the President meeting with the Prime Minister, I believe the President should be advised of the views of the JCS concerning the use of US forces in a peacekeeping role in Lebanon.

2. I have discussed the issue with my colleagues on the JCS and we believe that the dangers and potential cost to the US far outweigh the advantages for using US forces in a peacekeeping role. By putting US forces between the PLO and the Israelis, we might well be pouring burning gasoline on an already difficult situation rather than putting oil on troubled waters. Such use of US forces would most probably complicate our relations with the moderate Arab countries who would view it as US support for Israel's "aggressive" action in Lebanon. Worse yet, the most radical elements in the PLO, those firececy anti-US, might well be tempted to encourage confrontation with US forces and cause shooting incidents with US forces. The incidents could well become some of the most dangerous anti-US propaganda in the Arab world. The introduction of US forces into Lebanon might also give the Soviets a pretext for increased presence in the area. The cause of peace would be better served by using forces from other nations.

3. I am sure that the President understands it, but it might well be worth you repeating it to him that Israel's greatest contribution to our overall strategic position would be to move quickly toward a solution to the Palestinian problem. As long as we are perceived to be Israel's principal supporter and Israel is perceived as procrastinating in seeking a solution to the Palestinian problem, our strategic position in Southwest Asia is far weaker than it ought to be--or can be.

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS

Date: 01 AUG 2018 Authority: EO 13526 + 50 USC 1552

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MDR: 18 -M- 1292

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JOHN W. VESSEY JR.
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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