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

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THE JOINT STAFF
MEMORANDUM TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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

Thru: The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Subject: Strategy for Lebanon: The State Paper Plus
Alternatives ~~LOT~~

1. ~~LOT~~ The State Paper

First, the OJCS find confusion in the assumptions on which the paper is based.

- We have voted for a UNSC resolution calling for a ceasefire and unconditional and immediate Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. Yet Secretary Haig has informed the NATO Foreign Ministers there is no prospect of such a withdrawal, thus presenting an apparent conflict.

- Haig told the Ministers that Israeli withdrawal should be based on a "new status quo which enhances the integrity and independence of Lebanon," "totally reduces the security threat to Israel, and achieves the withdrawal of Syrian forces." This entirely supports Israeli objectives, and appears to reward aggression, by delivering to the Israelis the political objectives which they cannot achieve through military action.

- There is no analysis in this paper which demonstrates that our interests are identical to those of the Israelis. The new position is particularly difficult to understand as, with clear interagency agreement, we have made strenuous efforts over the past few months to deter Israel from an invasion of Lebanon on the grounds that such an invasion would have the most serious consequences for our policy and strategic position in the area, particularly for the peace process and relations with Arabs. Now that the invasion has occurred, we have apparently completely shifted our position. We believe those consequences need to be reexamined in relation to any new policy initiative.

Second, we are disturbed by the optimistic tone throughout of a paper which sets forth such difficult tasks. We would appreciate substantiation of such statements as the "emergency" (sic) in Lebanon gives them (Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, Oman and possibly Algeria) an excuse to work together in support of our plans at a cost far less than once contemplated." We see little indication

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that these states are looking for an "excuse" to support US (or Israeli) plans.

Most importantly, OJCS is firmly opposed to the introduction of US forces into Lebanon in a peacekeeping role at this time.

- We believe that to introduce US troops between combatants without preexisting political agreements or guarantees (which, for example, pertain to the MFO) would put US lives at risk from every extremist faction in the area.

- A US peacekeeping presence in Lebanon would have a detrimental effect on US relations with Arab countries in the Persian Gulf region. Iran has now aligned itself with Syria and has offered to contribute arms. It would be difficult for the US to play a UNIFIL role and, at the same time, enhance our station in the eyes of Saudi Arabia.

- Any such deployment could only be undertaken after a full domestic debate. We do not believe the Congress would accept such a deployment, and that the national debate which would be necessary would be most difficult in an election year.

- As a matter of policy, neither of the two superpowers should take on a peacekeeping role in this particular conflict. While an enhanced UNIFIL consisting of countries more powerful than the current UNIFIL members could be useful, we should avoid US or Soviet contingents in Lebanon where the risk of direct geographic and military contact could exist.

2. ~~(S)~~ ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES:

Our goals seem to be to end the threat to Israel, restore a Lebanese government which can govern, and move the Syrians and the Israelis out of Lebanon. The problem is how to gain leverage for these purposes, simultaneously, over the PLO, the Lebanese factions, the Israelis and the Syrians. We have roughly three courses open to us:

- 1.- Stand back. Let the Israelis continue to kill the Palestinians and Syrians and, eventually, prop up a highly dependent, beleaguered and repressive Christian government in Lebanon. The Israeli course depends on brute force, and necessarily produces an unstable situation. It will be

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anathema to all Arabs, and probably to most of our European allies. It may bring in the Soviets.

2. Combine the above with certain actions to save face, limit damage, keep our antagonists off balance -- like calls for a cease fire in place, eventual withdrawal, establishment of an expanded peace keeping force, and a new status quo ante in southern Lebanon. This appears to be our present course; it is limited, acceptable to Israel and it might buy time. It will probably incur at an early date all the liabilities of the first course.
3. Insist, at the price of sanctions and condemnation, that the Israelis withdraw, and use these actions to wrest commitments from the Arabs. For this to work, however, we cannot simply bail out the Arabs, but must insist on commitments by the endangered PLO to recognize Israel, and negotiate with it within the Camp David framework. For this approach to work - and it would represent a momentous breakthrough -- we would have to recognize the PLO and deal with it, as we have said we would if it met our conditions. This would win some supporters (Peres) and some opponents (Begin) in Israel, and divide Israel's supporters in the US too. But it could be the basis for a balanced and far-sighted US policy of peace in the region.

Only by the last sort of policy - with us applying pressure and conveying benefits to the parties to the conflict - can we persuade Congress to follow us in controversial issues like arms sales to Jordan. We cannot expect Congressmen to stand up to the Israeli lobby if the Administration does no, and does not provide a context of policy for the whole region.

Above all, OJCS does not believe the US should or must rush into any commitments or implied promises to Israel in order to satisfy Israeli objectives. Israel has exceeded any reasonable definition of self-defense, let alone proportionality, in response to a very arguable causis belli.

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

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