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

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JCSM-290-83
19 November 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Lebanon Situation, NSDD-111

1. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe the situation in Lebanon is at a critical juncture in terms of achieving US objectives. Maintenance of the cease-fire seems to be more and more tenuous. At the same time, there appears to be some increasing prospects for political movement. For example, President Gemayel emerged from the Geneva talks in a stronger political position and capable of greater independence. He has been recognized as the President of Lebanon by the factions, and he proposed a personal visit to Damascus. Also, at least in part because of his increased confidence, Gemayel apparently intends to reduce support to the Lebanese Forces (LF) and has stopped government subsidies of the LF radio station which will soon cease operation. There are other favorable signs including some indications of possible Israeli flexibility on the 17 May Agreement and similar flexibility on the part of the Syrians. During his recent trip to Beirut, Khaddam said he could agree to modification -- not necessarily total abrogation of the agreement. There are also signs of concessions from Wahid Jumblatt, for example, his release of hostages from Dayr-al-Qamar and his alleged willingness to discuss placing Druze militia under General Tannous as Territorial Brigades. Given these developments, it is essential that Ambassador Runsfeld now get vigorously involved in the negotiations. We have a window of opportunity and we must take advantage of it.

2. (S) Equally important are the mission and rules of engagement (ROE) we give to our troops on the ground. The current mission and ROE for the US Multinational Force (USMNF) were developed when the USMNF was deployed to Beirut in September 1982. The opposing forces at that time were the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) fighters. The MNF was deployed in an interposition role between these forces with the clear understanding of all parties that the MNF would not be attacked by either of the opposing forces or the Lebanese factions. The circumstances under which the USMNF was deployed to Beirut have changed substantially over the last several months. Key events, including the Israeli withdrawal on

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4 September 1983, the outbreak of factional fighting which subsequently led to the emergency situation at Sug-al-Gharb, the terrorist bombing of the USMNF on 23 October 1983, and the Israeli and French air strikes have significantly altered the environment in which the USMNF is deployed. The USMNF is now a target and has been singled out as an enemy by determined elements in Lebanon. Therefore, the mission we give our forces must be clear and the ROE sufficient to insure their safety.

3. (S) In light of the changed circumstances and in an effort to insure the safety of the USMNF, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend the following mission be given to USCINCEUR for the US portion of the Multinational Force in Lebanon.

Because the Lebanese cease-fire may collapse and attacks on government of Lebanon and MNF forces are likely, you are to:

X? - With Marine Amphibious Unit occupy and defend terrain which contributes to security of BIA. X?

at - Provide sufficient air and Naval gunfire support to insure protection of units ashore.

- Provide intelligence support and support for physical protection of forces ashore to minimize danger from sniper fire and other terrorist attacks.

- Coordinate with other friendly forces, other forces of MNF and Lebanese Armed Forces for intelligence exchange and mutual support.

4. (S) As the mission for the MNF must be clear and understandable, so must the ROE. The US forces involved must know exactly what we want them to do, the limit of their responsibilities, and what force they can use to protect themselves. The USMNF is now authorized whatever force is available if required for self defense. On the other hand, if it is the intention of the United States to provide combat support, naval gunfire and air support, to the LAF to help hold terrain whose loss would jeopardize the existence of the government of Lebanon, that support should not be tied to the safety of the USMNF contingent. // If it is our intent to provide such support, then the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that USCINCEUR be given a separate mission to be prepared to support the LAF with naval gunfire and/or air support when directed by the NCA.

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5. (u) If you concur with the points raised in this memorandum, recommend you send it to the President's Advisor for National Security Affairs.

John W. Vessey

JOHN W. VESSEY, JR.
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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