

Lebanon

PS
PS/MR HURD
PS/PUS
~~SIR J LEAHY~~
MR MOBERLY
SIR J BULLARD
HD/NENAD
HD/MED
HD/UND
HD/SEC DEPT
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IMMEDIATE

Deskby 021030Z

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FM BEIRUT 020845Z AUGUST 82
TO IMMEDIATE DESKBY 021030Z FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 464 2 AUGUST 82
INFO IMMEDIATE USUAL POSTS, JEDDA AND CAIRO

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LEBANON

1. I SAW HABIB THIS MORNING. HE GAVE ME WHAT FOLLOWS IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE, WHICH HE WAS SURE WOULD BE RESPECTED.
2. THE MILITARY COMMITTEE HAD BEEN RESTORED TO LIFE. ON THE LEBANESE SIDE WERE BRIGADIERS TANOUS (MARONITE) AND KHOREITEM (MUSLIM), ON THE PALESTINIAN ABU WALID AND ABU ZAIM. THE LEBANESE WERE ABOUT TO CONFER WITH THE AMERICANS TO HEAR HABIB'S PLAN AND THEN PUT IT TO THE PALESTINIANS.
3. HABIB'S PLAN WAS FOR A 14 RPT 14 DAYS' OPERATION. IT WOULD TAKE THE PALESTINIANS OUT BY LAND TO THE BEQA' FOR A VERY BRIEF STOP AND THEN TO SYRIA FOR DISPERSAL. THE PALESTINIANS WANTED TO TRAVEL ON THE ROUTE KHALDE - ARAMOUN - ALEY - SHTAURA AND THEN NORTHWARDS. NOW THAT THE AIRPORT WAS CLEAR, HOWEVER, HABIB WAS TOYING WITH THE IDEA OF EVACUATION BY AIR.
4. SO MUCH FOR DETAIL. THE PALESTINIANS SEEMED TO HAVE ACCEPTED THAT THEY HAD TO GO. BUT 'D DAY' HAD YET TO BE FIXED AND

~~THAT THEY HAD TO GO. BUT "D DAY" HAD YET TO BE FIXED AND~~
THERE WERE ALL SORTS OF PROBLEMS OVER HOW MANY WERE TO GO TO EACH
DESTINATION. THE MAJOR PROBLEM AT THE MOMENT WAS WITH THE
EGYPTIANS, WHO WERE DEMANDING NOT MERELY AMERICAN CONTACT WITH THE
PALESTINIANS BUT AMERICAN ACCEPTANCE OF SELF-DETERMINATION AS
THE PRICE FOR RECEIVING THEIR QUOTA OF PALESTINIANS.

5. COMMENT. AS I SUSPECTED, HABIB IS NEAR SUCCESS SEMICOLON
BUT, AS HE EMPHASIZED, IT COULD EASILY ALL GO WRONG. THE PALESTINIAN
NEGOTIATORS ARE BOTH MODERATE (NOT AMONG "THE MAD MEN",
AS SAEB SALAM DESCRIBED THEM TO ME).

6. AS I DRAFT THIS WITH MY DEFENCE ATTACHE IN AN OLIVE-GROVE
NEAR YARZI, THE CEASE-FIRE IS CRUMBLING. THE ISRAELIS ARE
SHELLING HADATH, WHICH IS NOW A PALESTINIAN SALIENT IF THERE ARE
ANY PALESTINIANS LEFT THERE. THE ISRAELIS HAVE AGAIN CUT OFF
WATER FROM WEST BEIRUT.

7. I AM SEEING SAEB SALAM TOMORROW AND HOPE TO HEAR SOMETHING
OF THE PALESTINIAN POINT OF VIEW, AT FIRST OR SECOND HAND.

ROBERTS...

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