

# CONFIDENTIAL

GRS 1150

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DESKBY 191700Z

FM DAMASCUS 191305Z MAY 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 144 OF 19 MAY

INFO IMMEDIATE BEIRUT, WASHINGTON, TEL AVIV

INFO ROUTINE AMMAN, BAGHDAD, JEDDA, ALGIERS, TUNIS, RABAT,  
MOSCOW, CAIRO

YOUR TELNO 89: LEBANON

## SUMMARY

1. WHEN I HANDED THE SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER YOUR MESSAGE ON LEBANON HE EXPLAINED SYRIAN OBJECTIONS TO THE AGREEMENT ON FAMILIAR LINES SEMI CLN SAID THAT THE (NEXT TWO WORDS UNDERLINED) STATUS QUO WAS BAD BUT WOULD GET WORSE UNLESS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY BROUGHT ABOUT UNCONDITIONAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL SEMI CLN CLAIMED THAT MAJORITY OPINION IN LEBANON ITSELF AND IN THE ARAB WORLD GENERALLY WAS AGAINST THE AGREEMENT SEMI CLN AND HINTED OMINOUSLY THAT THIS WOULD BECOME CLEAR WHEN MEASURES WERE TAKEN AS THEY HAD BEEN AGAINST EGYPT.

## DETAIL.

2. I SPENT THE BETTER PART OF AN HOUR IN A REASONABLY RELAXED ZEEETING WITH KHADDAM ON 19 MAY. I HANDED HIM THE MESSAGE IN YOUR TELNO 208 TO BEIRUT AS AMENDED BY PARAGRAPH 2 OF TUR, AND SPOKE AS IN PARAGRAPH 3 OF TUR.

3. KHADDAM ASKED ME TO EXPRESS HIS THANKS FOR YOUR INTEREST AND FOR YOUR MESSAGE. HIS IMMEDIATE COMMENTS ON THE LATTER WERE THAT YOUR CONFIDENCE IN GEMAYEL'S DETERMINATION IGNORED THE FACTS THAT THIS WAS NOT A QUESTION WHICH DEPENDED ON PERSONALITIES AND THAT GEMAYEL HAD SHOWN HIMSELF INCAPABLE OF SECURING LEBANESE INTERESTS AND (NEXT TWO WORDS UNDERLINED) A FORTIORI WAS UNABLE TO PROTECT SYRIA'S.

4. KHADDAM THEN EMBARKED ON A LENGTHY EXPOSITION OF SYRIA'S DETAILED OBJECTIONS TO THE AGREEMENT :-

(A). ENDING THE STATE OF BELLIGERENCY MEANT THE RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL CONTRARY TO LEBANON'S OBLIGATIONS TO THE ARAB LEAGUE. SYRIA WAS SEEKING A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT AS AGREED AT FEZ AND NOT A SERIES OF SEPARATE SETTLEMENTS SEMI CLN

(B). ARTICLE NINE (CANCELLATION OF EXISTING AGREEMENTS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE PRESENT ONE) MEANT THAT LEBANON WOULD BE SEPARATED FROM THE ARAB WORLD SEMI CLN

(C). NORMALISATION, THE OPENING OF BORDERS, THE FREE FLOW OF GOODS AND PEOPLE AMOUNTED TO THE DENIAL OF LEBANON'S ARAB IDENTITY AND WOULD LEAD TO THE SWAMPING OF THE LEBANESE MARKET BY ISRAELI INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS WITH WHICH

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LEBANESE GOODS WOULD BE UNABLE TO COMPETE SEMI CLN

(D). THE LEBANESE STATE WOULD BE TURNED INTO A TOOL FOR USE AGAINST THE LEBANESE PEOPLE WHO WOULD BE UNABLE TO EXPRESS ANY OPPOSITION TO ISRAEL, AND THIS WAS BOUND TO LEAD TO INSTABILITY SEMI CLN

(E). THE LEBANESE WOULD BE FORBIDDEN TO DEPLOY ADVANCED AIR DEFENCE EQUIPMENT OR TO STATION THEIR FORCES IN CERTAIN AREAS SUCH AS BAROUK SEMI CLN

(F). THE LEBANESE WOULD NOT EVEN BE ALLOWED TO HAVE MILITARY EQUIPMENT DESTINED FOR ANOTHER ARAB COUNTRY TRANSIT THEIR TERRITORY SEMI CLN

(G). OVER AND ABOVE THESE ''SHACKLES'' THE AGREEMENT CUT OFF A PART OF LEBANON WHICH WOULD BE UNDER JOINT CONTROL WITH THE ISRAELIS. THIS WAS A FLAGRANT INFRINGEMENT OF LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY, AS WAS THE POSITION ACCORDED TO HADDAD AND HIS MILITIAS: FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, A SOVEREIGN STATE WOULD BE COMPELLED TO INCLUDE WITHIN ITS OWN ARMED FORCES MILITIAS CONTROLLED BY HOSTILE ELEMENTS FROM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE.

5. KHADDAM ASKED RHETORICALLY WHAT WOULD BE LEFT OF LEBANON'S SOVEREIGNTY AND HOW IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES GEMAYEL COULD GUARANTEE SECURITY TO LEBANON OR TO SYRIA. THE AGREEMENT ITSELF WAS NOT WORTH THE NAME BECAUSE IT HAD BEEN CONCLUDED BETWEEN UNEQUAL SIDES: THE LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER HIMSELF HAD SAID THAT IT WAS IMPOSED UNDER THE HEAVY HAND OF OCCUPATION. IT HAD CAUSED RIFTS WITHIN LEBANON. THE COUNTRY WAS RULED BY EYALANGJ TS WHO WERE IN COLLUSION WITH ISRAEL AND WITH WHOM THEY HAD PERPETRATED THE SABRA AND CHATILA MASSACRES IN ORDER TO CREATE PANI AND SO SOFTEN UP THE LEBANESE PUBLIC FOR THESE LATER DEMANDS. SYRIA WAS PREPARED TO WITHDRAW ALONG WITH ALL OTHER FORCES, UNCONDITIONALLY AND SIMULTANEOUSLY, AND FOR A PLEBISCITE ON THE AGREEMENT TO BE HELD, THE RESULT OF WHICH SYRIA WOULD ACCEPT. BUT THE IMPOSITION OF THE AGREEMENT UNDER OCCUPATION MEANT THE DIVISION OF LEBANON, AND PROVIDED NO GUARANTEE OF PRESERVING THE COUNTRY'S SOVEREIGNTY, WHICH SYRIA WANTED AS MUCH AS BRITAIN DID.

6. KHADDAM THEN WENT ON TO TALK ABOUT THE OBJECTIONS TO THE AGREEMENT FROM THE STRICTLY SYRIAN POINT OF VIEW. A LEBANON UNDER THE PROTECTION OF ISRAEL WOULD PRESENT DIRECT THREATS TO SYRIA. ISRAEL WOULD HAVE MILITARY POSITIONS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON CLOSE TO SYRIA'S BORDERS SEMI CLN LEBANON WOULD BECOME AN OPEN COUNTRY FROM WHICH ISRAEL AND ISRAELIS WOULD HAVE ACCESS TO SYRIA SEMI CLN AS WE AND THE FRENCH KNEW BETTER THAN ANYONE, LEBANON WAS AN ARAB COUNTRY WHOSE INTERESTS WERE INTERTWINED WITH SYRIA'S.

7. REVERTING TO THE TEXT OF YOUR MESSAGE, KHADDAM SAID THAT SYRIAN FORCES ENTERED LEBANON NOT ONLY AT THE INVITATION OF THE THEN PRESIDENT BUT AT THE REQUEST OF THE VARIOUS LEBANESE

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/ FACTIONS

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FACTIONS AND IN ORDER TO PRESERVE LEBANESE UNITY AND MAINTAIN THE NATIONAL BALANCE. THE PRESENT AGREEMENT CONTRAVENED BOTH THOSE PURPOSES AND MADE THE LEBANESE PRESIDENT NO LONGER FREE TO SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE LEBANESE PEOPLE. THE NATIONAL BALANCE WOULD BE UPSET, THE PREVIOUS TROUBLE REVIVED AND THIS WOULD AFFECT SYRIA. IF THE ISRAELIS HAD THE RIGHT TO SEEK SECURITY, SO DID SYRIA.

8. ANSWERING THE TWO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS IN PARAGRAPH 3 OF YOUR TUR, KHADDAM SAID THAT

A. THUSYRIANS DID NOT WISH THE (NEXT TWO WORDS UNDERLINED) STATUS QUO TO CONTINUE - BUT NEITHER DID THEY WISH IT TO DETERIORATE. THIS COULD BE AVOIDED ONLY IF THE LEBANESE ACHIEVED COMPLETE AND GENUINE INDEPENDENCE AND IF ISRAEL WAS DENIED ANY GAIN FROM HER AGGRESSION SEMI CLN

B. THE POINT AT WHICH ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL COULD PROCEED WOULD BE THE POINT AT WHICH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ASSUMED ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AND SECURED UNCONDITIONAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. AS THINGS WERE ISRAEL HAD ACHIEVED POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND DELEGATED THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT THESE GAINS.

9. I SAID THAT GRANTED THAT THE AGREEMENT WAS LESS THAN PERFECT, AND CONTAINED PROVISIONS WHICH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT THEMSELVES HAD ADMITTED THAT THEY DID NOT LIKE, THE FACT REMAINED THAT IT WAS THEIR JUDGEMENT THAT THIS WAS THE BEST ARRANGEMENT POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. NOR DID THERE APPEAR TO BE AN OVERWHELMING DENUNCIATION OF THE AGREEMENT IN THE REST OF THE ARAB WORLD, PARTICULARLY AS COMPARED WITH THE POSITIONS TAKEN UP OVER CAMP DAVID. WAS IT NOT ALSO AN INFRINGEMENT OF LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY TO DENY THEM THIS OPPORTUNITY? KHADDAM INSISTED THAT MAJORITY OPINION IN BOTH LEBANON ITSELF AND THE ARAB WORLD GENERALLY WAS AGAINST THE AGREEMENT: THE PROCEEDINGS IN THE LEBANESE PARLIAMENT HAD BEEN A FARCE, AND POSITIONS IN THE ARAB WORLD HAD NOT YET HARDENED AS THEY WOULD WHEN MEASURES HAD BEEN TAKEN AS THEY HAD BEEN AFTER CAMP DAVID. HE COMMENTED THAT IT WAS CURIOUS THAT IF THE LEBANESE SUBMITTED TO ISRAELI/PHALANGIST

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/ PRESSURES

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PRESSURES THEY SHOULD BE REGARDED AS ACTING FREELY, YET IF THEY REJECTED THE AGREEMENT THIS WAS INTERPRETED AS DUE TO OUTSIDE DICTATION'@

10. I ASKED KHADDAM WHETHER THE PRESENT SITUATION IN WHICH ISRAELI ARTILLERY WAS WITHIN 25 KILOMETRES OF DAMASCUS WAS PREFERABLE TO THAT IN WHICH THERE WOULD ONLY BE JOINT PATROLS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. HE REPLIED THAT EITHER WAY TEL AVIV WAS WITHIN RANGE OF SYRIAN GUNS.

LUCAS

MIDDLE EAST

STANDARD

NENAD	MAED
MED	ESSD
NAD	ERD
SAD	ESID
UND	CONS D
EESD	CONS EM UNIT
ECD	MR EGERTON
WED	MR THOMAS
RID	MR HAYES
SEC D	CABINET OFFICE

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