

NSC / 1995 / 05 / 21

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May 14, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER

FROM: HAROLD H. SAUNDERS  
RICHARD T. KENNEDY

SUBJECT: WSAG Meeting on Lebanon and the  
Middle East Hostilities--Tuesday, May 15

The purposes of this meeting are:

1. to discuss in the context of general US contingency planning whether and how we should answer the Lebanese question about what the US would do if Syria intervenes in the present confrontation with the fedayeen and
2. to assure that contingency planning on the possibility of a resumption of general hostilities in the Middle East is being actively updated.

You will want to begin the meeting with a briefing by CIA on (a) the situation and prospects in Lebanon and (b) indications as to possible resumption of hostilities by Egypt. Mr. Colby is prepared to cover these subjects.

On the Lebanon crisis, there are two operational points that should be addressed:

1. Seven months ago, the Lebanese Foreign Minister asked what would be the US posture if Syria intervened in a Lebanese showdown with the fedayeen. He has asked on several occasions since for our answer. The State Department at the WSAG meeting will put forward for discussion a draft telegram authorizing our Charge to answer. You will want to hear the arguments both for and against any discussion of this kind with the Lebanese at this point. [An example of what State will propose is at Tab II-A under the general "Lebanon" Tab.]
2. You will want to review steps that the US might want to take if the Lebanese situation worsens such as preparations for a possible US show of force and the use of US military forces for evacuation in

DOS, NSC, JCS  
reviews completed.

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Lebanon and elsewhere in the Arab world. The contingency plans are in generally good shape but should be reviewed and updated.

There are precise questions in the talking points at the next tab geared to each of these points.

On the question of resumption of general hostilities in the Middle East, the contingency plans we have date from 1969 and are only partly relevant to the current situation. Your main purpose in the meeting should be to get people thinking about possible US actions if general hostilities seem likely and also to translate this general thinking into the development of concrete plans now while we still have time. Our proposal would be to quicken the pace of contingency planning so that something would be available by mid-June in case Sadat after the US-USSR summit decided that he would take some sort of military action. Again, your talking points give you precise points to make on this issue.

In summary, what you want out of this meeting are the following:

- Action or a decision not to act on a State Department telegram outlining contingency discussions with the Lebanese.
- Instruction to review and update our Lebanese contingency plans.
- Instruction to update by June 15 our contingency plans for resumption of general hostilities in the Middle East.
- Assure that evacuation plans are up to date.
- You might ask that Mr. DiBona develop a mechanism through which oil sharing could be discussed with our allies if the Arabs impose an embargo.

The papers in this book are as follows:

- Tab I: Talking points
- Tab II: Papers on the Lebanon Crisis. The main paper under this tab is a summary of steps that might be taken in three situations-- US actions short of military intervention, US choices among types of US military intervention and requirements for evacuation in a chaotic situation. At sub-tabs under the main summary paper done by our

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staff are the proposed State Department telegram for discussion with the Lebanese of what we would do in a crisis [sub-tab A], the current contingency plan for various levels of US military intervention [sub-tab B] and the current plan for evacuation in a chaotic situation [sub-tab C].

--Tab III: A paper describing present contingency plans for resumption of general hostilities [sub-tab A]. This also discusses the new characteristics of the present situation, the range of actions that would be open to the US if general hostilities resumed and contingency planning that should be done now. Also at this tab is a CIA assessment of the present likelihood of resumed hostilities (sub-tab B).

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TALKING POINTS

WSAG Meeting on Lebanon and Middle East Hostilities

Introduction

There are two reasons for our meeting today:

1. to assess our posture toward the current crisis in Lebanon and to discuss whether any US steps should be taken either with the Lebanese or in terms of making sure that we would have the widest possible choices if our units were needed for evacuation or for some other purpose;
2. to review the general likelihood of resumption of hostilities in the Middle East and to see what is necessary to assure that our contingency thinking is up to date.

Ask Mr. Colby to brief (he is prepared to cover both subjects).

Lebanon

We have a State Department proposal for talks with the Lebanese on what the US might do if the Syrians intervene. This proposal grows out of a question from the Lebanese Foreign Minister about likely US responses.

-- The first question is what are the advantages and disadvantages of a discussion of this kind now. On the one hand, we owe the Lebanese some sort of answer. On the other hand, any US answer

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might encourage the Lebanese to expect more than the US can actually do. What are your views?

--What are the kinds of things the US might do short of direct military intervention?

--Would we make a public statement supporting Lebanon's independence and territorial integrity? How effective would that be?

--What would we do to encourage the Soviets to try to restrain the Syrians? What would we do if we were asked by the Soviets in return to restrain any Israeli moves?

--Do we want to encourage Israeli mobilization in such a situation? Could we maintain a distinction among mobilization, air strikes only and air/ground involvement?

--Would we want to press the Jordanians to do something on the Syrian border?

--Are there other steps we might want to consider?

--For planning purposes should we place any limits on ourselves in thinking about possible US military actions ranging from a show of force to full military intervention?

--Should we consider now preparing for military moves related to evacuation or a show of force (Sixth Fleet movements, overflights of Lebanese territory from carriers)?

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--What staging or overflight rights would we need for any such moves?

--Is there a likelihood that we would have to evacuate Americans from other Arab countries? Are we prepared for that contingency?

--Should we ready any US forces for either of these purposes?

--What are your views on the possibility of US military intervention in a Lebanese crisis? Air action only? Air/ground intervention?

In summary, there are two actions to be considered:

1. Should we instruct our Charge in Beirut to discuss contingency planning with the Lebanese government?
2. Should we prepare any US forces for evacuation or other purposes?  
Would the IG review and update plans for military action?

General Hostilities

We had contingency plans for a general Middle East war in 1969, but they are pretty well out of date now. They need to be revised in the light of the changed situation.

What are the situations we are most likely to face now? I can see, for instance, the following:

--Resumption of the war of attrition.

--A general Arab offensive mounted without regard for the probability that the Israelis would defeat it.

--An Israeli pre-emptive attack.

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Where should our plans focus most of their attention? One possibility would be the following:

- Assume that in the initial stages of a crisis we would be active to re-establish the cease-fire and to keep the US and USSR uninvolved.
- Also assume that Israel would be likely to hold her own militarily.
- As I see it, the difficult situations would come if:

- The Soviets involve themselves despite our diplomatic efforts. Even if their involvement were limited to resupply or some other step short of involving their own forces, it would be important for the US to have a way of showing them that this kind of behavior is costly.

- If the Israelis reached too far in terms of acquiring new territory or pushing their military action too vigorously, the US would have to consider its obligation to encourage restraint.

I understand there is a JCS paper and also a Special National Intelligence Estimate in the works. Could we make those the nucleus of a revised contingency plan? These should be completed by June 15 so that if the US-USSR summit becomes a factor in Sadat's timing, we would be ready.

What other subjects should be covered?

- Would the State Department and Defense Department cooperate to assure that our evacuation plans are up to date?

- Should we ask Mr. DiBona to consider what might be done in the way of oil sharing if a comprehensive oil boycott is organized?

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CRISIS IN LEBANON

Analytical Summary of Contingency Plans

PART I -- CONTINGENCIES

There are three general categories of actions the US would have to consider if the Lebanese crisis worsened and the threat of Syrian intervention mounted: (a) steps short of direct intervention, including public, diplomatic and military supply measures, (b) steps involving US military intervention, ranging from a simple show of force to ultimate landing of US troops, (c) evacuation. They are examined below.

A -- US Actions Short of Direct Intervention.

State envisages the steps below. They would put these to the Lebanese for consideration. They have proposed steps such as those in the cable for clearance at Tab A, and will probably present an updated version of this cable at the meeting.

1. US public statements in support of Lebanon's independence and territorial integrity.

Pro: We are on record on this score already but restatement of US commitments in a crisis could boost Lebanese morale.

Con: US words alone might imply more US support for Lebanon than the US is prepared to provide. Moreover, it is questionable whether mere US words would have much effect in a crisis.

2. An approach to the Soviets to use their influence to restrain the Syrians. [State has already made a working level approach to Soviet Charge Vorontsov -- cable attached]

Pro: This would make sense in view of the Soviets' special relationship with Syria, and it would be called for as part of the US efforts to persuade great powers not to exploit their

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clients' actions for their own gain. The Lebanese would probably ask for and expect such a move.

Con: The Syrians may not listen; the Soviets would disclaim much influence over them. Despite the specter of a dangerous situation ahead, the Soviets also may not want to press the Syrians because the Chinese could criticize them for joining in the "liquidation" of the Palestinian resistance. Much could depend on the USSR view of the stake in US/USSR relations and the prospect of an all-out Middle East war if the Syrians are not restrained.

3. Israeli movements. Consultation with the Israelis on possible Israeli mobilization to cause the Syrians to draw back. We could try to draw distinctions between mobilization, air involvement only and air/ground involvement.

Pro: This could be an effective deterrent. Israeli attacks against Syrian targets in past months have had the effect of causing the Syrians to restrain the fedayeen. Also, Israeli mobilization was one of the important moves which caused the Syrians to draw back in the 1970 Jordan crisis.

Con: The US would have little control over the Israelis and, by encouraging them, the US would become associated with Israeli actions that might create a "new" situation, with Israel in forward positions in Syria or even in control of Southern Lebanon. Also, Lebanon may not be able over the longer run to bear the onus of Israel's having come to its defense. The US would be held responsible throughout the area, and the Soviets would exploit any of these elements.

4. Consultations with the Jordanians on the same subject.

Pro: They are capable of and perhaps willing to divert some Syrian forces by mobilization along the border.

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Con: The Jordanians have talked so far as if they do not wish to get involved. They would find it difficult to be associated with an Israeli operation. They have already indicated in a preliminary way that they were not sure "how much they could do." They may fear Syrian retaliation, and association with "reactionary" moves against the Palestinian resistance could raise the whole specter of further Jordanian isolation in the Arab world; they would lose all chance of regaining their subsidies from Kuwait.

5. Airlifting of military equipment the Lebanese request.

Pro: This would have practical value in strengthening the Lebanese forces and a psychological value in demonstrating US support. Defense is currently expediting deliveries of Lebanese requests for small arms ammunition, but we could get further urgent requests.

Con: Dramatic resupply during a crisis could further provoke tensions and aggravate the anti-US campaign that we are colluding to "liquidate" the resistance. The Soviets would exploit this. Our interests elsewhere in the Arab world might be attacked. The Lebanese government might not wish to appear too openly dependent on the US.

6. Demarches to other countries -- in addition to the USSR -- with influence in Syria (the French are reportedly trying to be helpful in Damascus) to restrain Syria with promises the US would be helpful in Tel Aviv to restrain the Israelis. The objective would be to press for a stand-off on all sides and permit a defusing of the situation on the ground, with Lebanon to resolve its own problems with the fedayeen.

Pro: This would seem to be a fair distribution of pressure on all parties, since the Arabs charge the US with letting Israel do what it wants. Also, the prospect of an Israeli pre-emptive move against a forward Syrian position is as germane to the beginning of broader hostilities as

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is a move by Syria to intervene in Lebanon so we would be playing an important role in urging Israeli restraint comparable to the role we expect of the Soviets with the Syrians.

Con: The Israelis would balk, not only resenting US pressure to avoid taking actions they may believe are in their interest but also feeling acquiescence in US pressure could restrict their future maneuverability. They would object of the equation of US pressure on Israel with Soviet pressure on an aggressive Syria.

7. Demarche to the Lebanese urging them to take the case of Syrian intervention to the UN.

Pro: Debate in the UN, however acrimonious and difficult for US positions, might permit time for a defusing of the situation on the ground. A mounting of opinion against Syrian intervention could induce restraint on the part of the Syrians. If Israel had not intervened, the US would be in a better position than usual because this would be a case of one Arab government attacking another.

Con: The Lebanese are probably reluctant to incur further wrath of the fedayeen within Lebanon by taking their case to the UN against the Syrian "brother". The Arabs generally would find it difficult to air their intra-Arab quarrels in the UN, a forum traditionally reserved for attacking Israel. The Lebanese couldn't face the onus of going there.

Most of the foregoing could be reinforced by the most limited of the military moves described in contingency B below.

B -- US Military Intervention.

Depending on the nature of a deteriorating situation in Lebanon, the US could consider a range of limited to large-scale military maneuvers while weighing the risks of broader confrontation in

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the Arab world and with great powers. The assumption would be that the US is helping Lebanon against external aggression. The current contingency paper is at Tab B.

1. Show of Force: This could involve conduct of naval demonstrations within sight of the Lebanese coast; overflights of Lebanese territory from carriers (Sixth Fleet would be employed; depending on location, it could be available in 2-3 days); alerting of ground and air units in the US; and a visible airlift of equipment into Lebanon.

Pro: As in Jordan 1970, such movements would strengthen belief that the US means business. It could be combined with a decision to have the Israelis mobilize.

Con: A show of force, without readiness to go any further, could heighten tensions and provoke the Soviets to similar moves without protecting Lebanon. The US would be linked with Israeli "aggression" and "reactionary" forces liquidating the resistance.

2. Air and Naval Fire Support for Lebanese Forces -- Close air support for Lebanese forces; airlift of Lebanese forces within Lebanon (could be relevant because of mountain ranges which divide Lebanon); air resupply of Lebanese forces if necessary; naval gunfire support.

Pro: This might be the only way to save the Lebanese government and army in a deteriorating situation involving Syrian intervention.

Con: The US would be actively involved in inter-Arab fighting with the risk of drawing the Soviets in, a risk we have repeatedly tried to minimize. Direct US involvement could also spark an attack on Israel. Also, in the post-Vietnam period, Americans who have gone along with arms to Israel -- on the theory that Israel would fight its own wars -- may not go along with direct US involvement. There could be anti-Israeli backlash there "for having started the whole thing in the first place."

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3. Full-scale Intervention by US Combat Forces -- Airborne/ amphibious operations to insure control of Beirut and Rayak airfields, amphibious operations to seize Beirut and Sidon ports; follow-on operations to secure mountain passes within Lebanon and naval and air blockades to cut off supplies and assistance to the enemy elements, etc.

This option would have the pros and cons on the previous option, only intensified.

C -- Evacuation

There are fairly straightforward scenarios for evacuating the some 6,000 Americans in Lebanon or for beginning at least a 'thinning out' process. The actual number that wanted to leave would probably be closer to the 3,600 that left in 1967. In the present circumstances, embassy Beirut is attentive to these as are State and Defense here, though no recommendation for evacuation has been made as the situation has not yet required it.

The main problem arises if Lebanese forces are unable to assure the security of Americans to, at and from the assembly point in Beirut and to the point of departure (airport or by sea if necessary). This raises the possibility of a requirement for US military assistance in evacuation. There are detailed plans for the arrival of military forces to assist in Americans' departure, either by air or by sea. The current contingency paper is at Tab C.

The time and scope of a US evacuation could have military implications. If the options of contingency 2 involving US military intervention are undesirable and if the situation in Lebanon requires evacuation with the assistance of US military forces, this offers the option of leaving behind (or having them dawdle) some of the evacuation forces in a show of support.

--The main drawback of this is that it would run the serious risk of compromising our NATO friends who might be willing to cooperate in staging an evacuation but would be totally unwilling, given their own Arab interests, to be dragged into Arab/Israeli confrontation.

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II -- ISSUES FOR DECISION

Reflecting on the options, there are some decisions which need be made on a contingency basis in order to provide guidance (1) in the event the current situation goes downhill in Lebanon and a threat of external aggression from Syria seems imminent and (2) because the Lebanese are pressing for an understanding of US policy as helpful to their own thinking. [In part this takes the form of the immediate bureaucratic question of handling a proposed State cable to embassy Beirut at Tab A.]

The following issues would seem to be raised by the preceding discussion of contingency options.

1. What are the parameters of US military involvement in a Lebanese crisis involving a Syrian threat. Or, to dramatize the question, what are the parameters even if there is a risk the current Lebanese government could fall to a more radical one?

--In line with US regional and global strategy, would we agree or not that there are no circumstances under which the US would want to get directly militarily involved (contingency B -- options 2 and 3 -- air/naval support for Lebanese forces or commitment of US combat forces.

--If so, can we agree to leave the following military options, short of direct intervention, open?

--Military moves related to evacuation which would amount to a show of force.

--An enhanced show of force, including Sixth Fleet movements, overflights of Lebanese territory, etc.

--Evacuation with military assistance which could involve leaving some troops behind in a show of support. [Would this compromise our NATO friends who are providing staging for evacuation only?]

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--Should we inform the Lebanese in any reply to their current request of the parameters of our military intent (this will be dealt with below)?

2. Does the US have a proper scenario for evacuation in the current situation?

--Is the time frame such that forces should be alerted or moved now?

--How close could Fleet elements move towards Lebanon, short of amounting to a show of force? Can we agree on a position?

--Are staging rights through NATO countries assured for evacuation purposes only? Will there be problems or should we now be seeking contingency agreement of those staging rights?

--Is there any chance that we might want to use evacuation movements for broader military purposes (leave troops behind), or would staging rights be compromised now and in the future? Should we drop this option? Would we so inform the Lebanese now?

3. What is the US position on an Israeli role in a scenario to deter the Syrians?

--Do we envisage a limited (they might remain quiet, mobilization at most along with US consultations) role or an unlimited role (they act in their own natural interests which could include a pre-emptive strike)?

--In either case, should the US be consulting with the Israelis now to determine their intentions?

--To what extent do Lebanese preferences for or against an Israeli role (Lebanon would be charged with "collusion") enter our thinking?

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--What would be the US position if the Soviets, in return for maximum pressure on Syria for restraint, pressed the US to restrain the Israelis? Could we do it? Would we do it? Could the US offer exercise of US influence with Israel for Soviet influence with Syria?

--In a crunch which comes upon us quickly, what would an Israeli reaction look like? Could the US withstand Arab reaction?

4. What is the US position on a Jordanian role in a scenario to deter the Syrians?

--What could they effectively do as part of the show of force scenario?

--Are the Jordanians interested or should we discourage their becoming involved (except if events spilled over into Jordan).

5. What are the roles of (a) other Arab states, (b) US allies (such as France, the UK), (c) the UN? Should we forget about the UN (Lebanon will resist going there against another "brother," Syria and the Arab world generally will not want inter-Arab fights publicly aired)? Should the US be talking to third parties now with influence in Syria (the French are reportedly already trying to urge restraint in Damascus)? What mix of representations would be useful?

6. The immediate question: How should we respond to the Lebanese request for an appreciation of US policy in a crunch?

The State cable at TabA proposes a general line to serve as the basis for US/GOL consultations. Should it be more specific? Could we now inform the Lebanese of the parameters of our military role in a crisis since this could help determine their own course of action? (No direct US intervention)

Or is it preferable to remain general so as not to encourage the the Lebanese to think the US has abandoned them?

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Should we discuss with the Lebanese how they see their own situation with the fedayeen evolving?

Is the US being appropriately responsive to Lebanese arms requests? [The Lebanese have been informed the US is unable to provide equipment (we are willing to airlift) at reduced prices or on grant basis and the Lebanese expressed disappointment.]

Rosemary Neaher  
Harold H. Saunders

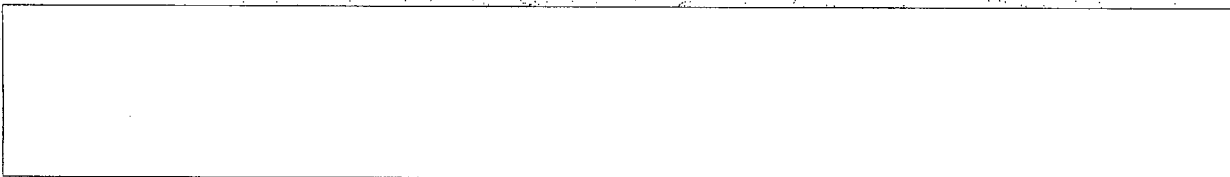
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APPARENTLY SPEAKING TO BE HELPFUL.

2) MAIN SOURCE OF TROUBLE AND PRINCIPAL OBSTACLE TO MAINTENANCE OF LEBANESE-FEDAYEEN CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENTS SEEMS TO LIE IN ATTITUDE AND ACTIONS OF SYRIAN GOVERNMENT. SYRIA HAS SHARPLY ATTACKED LEBANESE GOVERNMENT PUBLICLY AND ITS ACTION IN ALLOWING FEDAYEEN UNITS IN SYRIA TO CROSS BORDER INTO LEBANON, IN PARTICULAR, ARE CREATING DANGEROUS SITUATION.

3) THERE IS DANGER OF HATCH ALL SHOULD BE SHARE THAT SYRIAN INTERVENTION IN LEBANON COULD RISK AGGRAVATING CONFLICT AND HAVE SERIOUS DESTABILIZING EFFECT THROUGHOUT MIDDLE EAST AREA. IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY WHAT COULD HAPPEN BUT SYRIA HAS CLOSE TIES WITH OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES, INCLUDING EGYPT AND THIS MAKES SITUATION VOLATILE. IF NOT BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL, CEASE-FIRE COULD BE THREATENED.

4) US WOULD NOT WANT SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO OCCUR AND BELIEVES SOVIETS SHARE OUR CONCERN. AS SOVIET GOVERNMENT HAS CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP WITH SYRIA AND HAS ON NUMBER OCCASIONS EXPRESSED NEED FOR RESTRAINT IN AREA, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD HELP TO AVOID SERIOUS WORSENING OF SITUATION IN LEBANON AND THE AREA, IF SOVIETS URGED SYRIAN GOVERNMENT TO FOLLOW COURSE OF MODERATION AND RESTRAINT AND WE HOPE SOVIETS WOULD DO SO AS MATTER OF URGENCY.

5) VORONOV MADE NO MENTION OTHER THAN TO ASK WHETHER US HAS RESTRAINTS AGAINST AMMAN. AMMAN REPLIED HE WOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT AMMAN WOULD NOT TAKE ANY RESTRICTIVE ACTION UNLESS VORONOV UNDERTOOK TO PASS THE APPROACH IMMEDIATELY TO SOVIET GOVERNMENT.

6) EMBASSY SHOULD SEEK EARLIEST APPOINTMENT AT FOREIGN

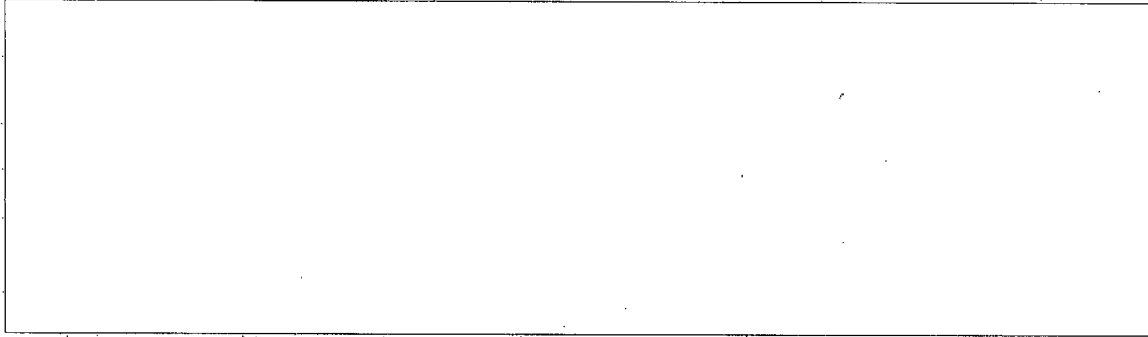
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4. FOR RETRIBUTION YOU MAY BRIEF GFL RE YOUR APPROACH TO  
SOVIETS IN BOTH WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW PER PART ONE ABOVE.  
ROGERS

NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY



# Department of State

# TELEGRAM

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 5433

F.O. 11652: GDS  
 TAGS: MASS, PINS, LE  
 SUBJECT: LEBANESE ARMY RESUPPLY (AMMUNITION)

REF: STATE 089678 AND 088647 NOTAL

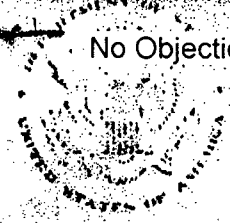
INFORMED GEN GHANEM DELIVERY SCHEDULE BUT THAT AMMO  
 COULD NOT BE OFFERED AT REDUCED PRICE OR AS GRANT. HE  
 EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT AND SAID HE WOULD PURCHASE  
 AMMUNITION ELSEWHERE BUT DID NOT INDICATE WHERE.  
 HOUGHTON

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Department of State

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APPROVED BY NEA - MR. SISCO  
DDI/ISA - COL. PRADOS  
NEA - MR. ATHERTON  
PH/MAS - MR. NORLAND (XUMS.)  
OSD/ISA - MR. NOYES  
DSAA - MR. THIEBERGER  
AIR FORCE - MR. ROBINSON

ANDERSON \_\_\_\_\_  
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S F C R E T STATE 089678

F.O. 11652: GDS  
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SUBJECT: LEBANESE ARMY RESUPPLY

REF: BEIRUT 5293

JOINT STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE

1. YOU SHOULD TELL GENERAL GHANEM THAT USG OFFER CONTINUED STATE 089678 STILL STANDS AND THAT IF GOL SO DESIRES WE COULD BEGIN AIRLIFT DELIVERY OUT OF CONTINENTAL USA WITHIN APPROXIMATELY THREE TO FOUR DAYS FOLLOWING GOL SIGNATURE ON LETTER OF OFFER. REGRET WE ARE UNABLE OFFER

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PAGE 02 STATE 089678

AMMUNITION OR DELIVERY ON GRANT OR REDUCED PRICE TERMS.  
YOU MAY TELL GENERAL SHANEN WE WOULD SEE NO OBJECTION TO  
HIS GETTING THIS AMMUNITION FROM OTHER SOURCES IF READILY  
AVAILABLE AND PRICE ATTRACTIVE.

2. FYI: WE SEE SOME MERIT IN HAVING LEBANESSE GO AHEAD AND  
PROCURE AMMUNITION FROM EUROPEAN SOURCES. PROCUREMENT  
FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA, IN PARTICULAR, WOULD PUT SOVIET BLOC  
COUNTRY IN POSITION OF SUPPORTING GOL AGAINST FEDAYEEN,  
WHICH IN POLITICAL AND PROPAGANDA TERMS WOULD OBVIOUSLY  
HAVE ADVANTAGES. END FYI. ROBERTS

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May 14, 1973

CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR AN ARAB-ISRAELI WAR

Contingency plans for possible US action in the event of another Arab-Israeli war were developed in 1969 and deal primarily with the possibility of Soviet intervention. While this would still be the most dangerous aspect of an outbreak of fighting between Arabs and Israelis, it does not seem as likely today as in 1969-1970. This memorandum (1) summarizes the 1969 plans, (2) discusses the new characteristics of the present situation, (3) outlines the range of actions that would be open to us and (4) suggests contingency planning that should be done.

Summary of Existing Plans

The 1969 plans dealt with a situation in which hostilities resumed, the USSR was actively supporting the Arabs, and Israel was threatened with defeat. Some of these plans go beyond US responses that are likely to be necessary or approved; they were drawn up to present a full spectrum of choices. The plans addressed two possible scenarios:

1. First Scenario: Overt and major involvement of Soviet military forces in support of Arab forces seeking to oust the Israelis from the occupied areas and to inflict a major defeat on the Israeli Defense Force. The primary circumstance that might bring about this degree of Soviet involvement is described as a need to support Egypt and Syria following Israeli retaliatory military action that threatened their economic infrastructure or led to Israeli occupation of additional territory. Projected US responses would pass through four levels of response:

--Prior to Soviet involvement, political/military efforts would be made to defer the Soviets and re-establish observance of the cease-fire. Consultations with the Soviets, Israel, Arab governments, the UK, France and others are envisaged. A task force would convene and steps would be taken to place our forces on alert. [Comment: The details of this part of the plan are dated and do not take into account recent developments in US-Soviet relations. The general approach and alert measures are nonetheless relevant to the situations we might face today.]

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--Once Soviet military involvement has occurred in Israeli-held territory, a number of military measures are envisaged, including a show of force by the Sixth Fleet and emergency delivery of aircraft to Israel, as well as evacuation of American citizens. Some fifty aircraft could reach Israel within two days of a decision. [Comment: In the current context, this is probably the strongest move the US would have to consider.]

--Despite US aid, Israeli forces are being forced back by Arab forces openly aided by the Soviets, including Soviet pilots in Arab air forces. The US receives an urgent appeal from the Israeli Prime Minister for military assistance to prevent the destruction of the state of Israel. The President decides to halt the flow of Soviet supplies to Arab countries by interdicting Soviet lines of communication.

--If interdiction of Soviet supplies to the Arabs fails to reverse the situation and Israel is on the verge of defeat, US forces might directly intervene on Israel's side.

2. Second Scenario: The Soviets intervene in Arab-Israeli hostilities by naval interdiction of Israeli sea lines of communications up to and including a Soviet naval attack by air, missiles, or guns on Israeli coastal areas. The US response could involve punitive military action against Egyptian ports.

For your information, the JCS has drafted a revised set of contingency plans, but these have not yet been agreed with State. In addition, an NIE is being prepared on the likelihood of Egyptian-Israeli hostilities. These two documents could serve as a basis for updating contingency plans, once the appropriate scenarios are clearly defined.

#### The New Context: Situations We Might Face

Since 1969, several developments have occurred which affect the decisions the USG would face in the event of a full-scale renewal of Arab-Israeli fighting. Most important are the following:

--The withdrawal of Soviet combat forces in Egypt, which makes it seem less likely that the Soviets would engage their own military forces on behalf of Egypt at least and probably Syria as well.

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--The strengthening of the Israeli armed forces and the significant improvement in their defensive positions on the Suez Canal following the war of attrition. Egyptian improvements in air defense since 1970 have been impressive and could make Israeli airstrikes costly, but without Soviet help the effectiveness of the equipment would be questionable.

--Jordan's determination and ability to remain uninvolved in another round of war.

--The improved state of US-USSR relations. This would be no guarantee, however, that the Soviets would not involve themselves in ways short of active military intervention that would be cause for concern, as was true during the first half of 1970. Our plans are aimed primarily at deterring the most obvious and overt forms of Soviet involvement, not the more likely and less provocative types.

--Heightened sensitivity in the Arab world to the uses of Arab oil as a political weapon, raising the chances of an effective oil boycott.

In mid-1973, a general Arab-Israeli conflict--in contrast to a crisis that might develop in Lebanon--could take three forms:

1. Egyptian resumption of the war of attrition along the Suez Canal. Soviet and US interests in such a situation would be ambiguous and would depend heavily on how the hostilities developed. The Soviets may hope to see Sadat ousted, but would not welcome another demonstration that they had failed to help a friend in time of need. The US might view with equanimity further damage to Egypt's military capability, but would fear the broadening of the conflict, reactions against US interests, and pressures on the Soviets to come to the help of the Egyptians. From a military standpoint, the Israelis seem fully confident that they can handle this situation.
2. A coordinated Egyptian-Syrian offensive perhaps with Iraqi reserve support. King Hussein believes this scenario to be likely. Egypt's minimal objective, as in the previous case, would be to raise tensions and stimulate outside diplomatic efforts to end the crisis and impose a settlement. At a maximum, the Egyptians might hope to cross the Canal and hold some territory until a new cease-fire could be arranged. US and Soviet interests once again would depend on the evolution of the conflict, with pressures for US involvement building if the Israelis were unable to counter the Arab offensive thrust quickly.

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3. Israeli pre-emption in anticipation of an Egyptian-Syrian attack. If the Israelis conclude that an attack is likely, they may pre-empt in order to reduce their own casualties. This could involve airstrikes at Egyptian and Syrian bases, destruction of SAM sites, Israeli commando operations across the Canal, or troop movements toward Damascus. A possible problem for the US in this scenario would be Soviet requests that the US restrain Israel, with the implied threat that the alternative would be the introduction of Soviet forces to prevent the collapse of their clients.

The Range of Possible US Responses

1. Diplomatic initiatives to prevent US-USSR confrontation and to restore the cease-fire.

--Ask the Soviets to restrain the Egyptians and Syrians; to support a cease-fire resolution in the UN; and seek their agreement that we will both remain uninvolved in the conflict provided that vital interests of our friends are not threatened.

--Ask the Europeans for support of diplomatic efforts at the UN and elsewhere to restore the cease-fire; consult on measures to be taken in the event oil supplies are disrupted.

--At the United Nations, present a public statement on US policy toward the conflict; support cease-fire resolution in Security Council.

--Toward the Israelis, two different types of action might be required, depending on circumstances: (1) if Israel has pre-empted or is pressing her advantage too vigorously, we may want to try to restrain the Israelis and get them to agree to a cease-fire with no territorial changes; (2) if Israel is sustaining serious losses or is facing equipment shortages, consultations may be required on emergency resupply of selected arms packages, including aircraft, ECM, artillery, "smart bombs," etc.

--Toward the Arab countries, we would want to develop a defensible public posture (no collusion with Israel to take more territory, call for cease-fire). We would also want to contact Egypt to call for an end to the fighting; Jordan to emphasize the need to remain uninvolved; and Saudi Arabia to urge non-participation in any oil boycott.

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2. Steps to be taken if Soviets provide support for an Arab military offensive (e. g., Soviet technicians operate SAMs, pilots fly combat air patrol over Egypt and Syria, or Soviets undertake substantial resupply efforts during fighting to sustain Arab offensive). Even if these Soviet actions seemed unlikely to pose an immediate military threat to Israel, we might still wish to signal to the Soviets that this behavior can be costly.

--Alert US forces.

--Move Sixth Fleet to Eastern Mediterranean.

--Airlift military equipment to Israel.

--Public denunciation of Soviet role in the fighting.

--Cancellation of scheduled US-Soviet exchanges.

--Stop shipments of wheat.

--Postpone talks on arms limitations, European security, etc.

3. Steps to minimize threats to US interests, especially the lives of US citizens in the area and economic interests.

--Evacuation, especially from Lebanon and Libya, both of which have large numbers of American citizens. The current mood in the Arab world is unusually hostile to the United States and could lead to incidents against our citizens. Plans exist for the evacuation of Americans from Lebanon (6000+) and Libya (3000) where they are most vulnerable. Smaller numbers of Americans might also need to be evacuated from Kuwait, Egypt, and Algeria.

--Provide for diplomatic presence in the event of break in relations with Libya and expulsion of US diplomats from Cairo.

--Consult with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait on protection for US-owned oil facilities and encourage both governments to continue flow of oil.

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Additional Planning Required

State will recommend that the present contingency plan be revised drawing on the JCS draft and ~~the~~ NIE on the possibility of Egyptian-Israeli hostilities. The envisaged time for completion would be two or three months. You may want to press the following points for consideration in revising the contingency plan:

--Adapt the scenarios to the present context.

--Concentrate on the range of political/military moves short of the use of force that might help deter the Soviets, gain their cooperation, or signal to them our determination not to allow them to exploit an Arab-Israeli crisis.

--Revisions of the contingency plan should be completed by mid-June. It seems less likely that Sadat would resume shooting before the UNSC debate or the USSR-US Summit than after, so we should be ready then.

It would also be useful to ask State to assign someone to review or develop plans for the following situations:

--Evacuation, especially from Libya, Lebanon and Egypt.

--Diplomatic approaches to friendly Arab states, Europeans, UN, Israel.

Plans for consultations on oil sharing in the event of disruptions of oil supplies should be done by Mr. DiBona in cooperation with representatives from State, Treasury, NSC and elsewhere as necessary.

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