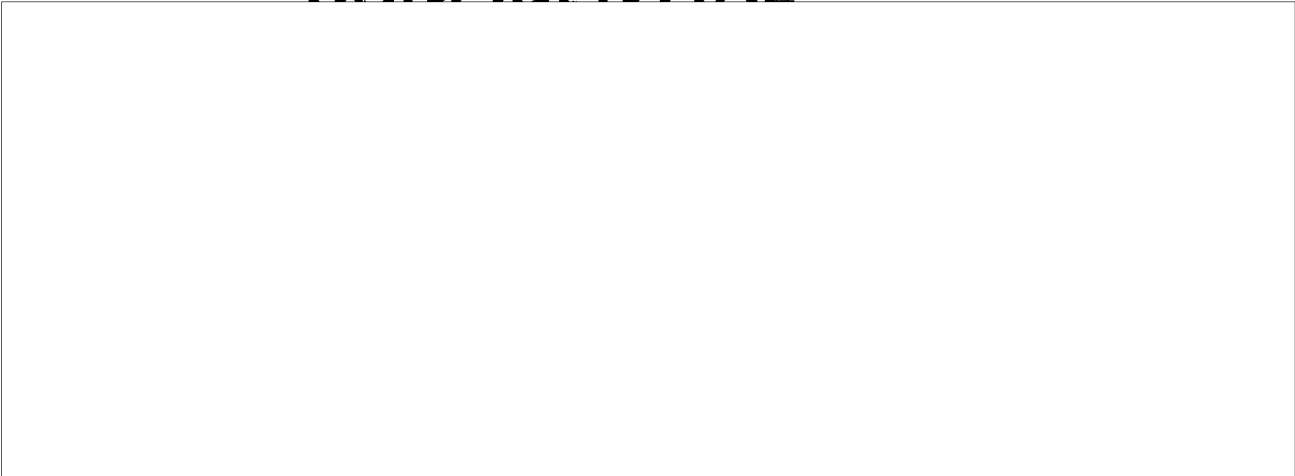


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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
 TAGS: PREL, LE, US, SA, SV, SY  
 SUBJECT: CODEL TOWER RECEIVES GLOOMY LEBANON ASSESSMENT  
 - LINKED TO WIDER ISRAELI STRATEGY FROM FOREIGN  
 - MINISTER SAUD

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT).

2. SUMMARY: CONCLUDING AN ARTICULATE ANALYSIS OF THE LEBANESE SITUATION AND THE PALESTINIANS' PLIGHT, SAUD AL FAYSAL TOLD SENATOR TOWER AND REPRESENTATIVE MCCAIN FEBRUARY 15 THAT THE RECENT HISTORY OF REGION IS A CATALOG OF "MISSED OPPORTUNITIES." HE SAID THAT THE REDEPLOYMENT OF THE MARINES HAD NOT AFFECTED U.S. PRESTIGE AND CREDIBILITY IN ARAB EYES; WHETHER THE U.S. ACHIEVED ITS GOAL OF A SOVEREIGN, INDEPENDENT LEBANON WOULD. SAUD EMPHASIZED THAT DESPITE SETBACKS THE KINGDOM WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARD THAT GOAL, WHICH IT SHARES WITH THE US. WHILE BLAMING JUMBLATT, HE DID NOT FULLY ACCEPT THE ARGUMENT THAT THE SYRIANS HAD BEEN INTRANSIGENT, AND PLACED MUCH OF THE ONUS FOR THE DETERIORATION ON ISRAEL. SAUD ADVANCED THE ARGUMENT THAT IN LEBANON AS ON THE WEST BANK ISRAEL HAD IN FACT REFUSED TO TRADE "TERRITORY FOR PEACE" AND INSTEAD PRACTI

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PRACTICED A POLICY OF SELECTIVE AGGRESSION FOLLOWED BY NEGOTIATED WITHDRAWAL. THE SYRIANS FEAR THEY ARE NEXT ON ISRAEL'S LIST AND THUS SEEK ABROGATION OF THE MAY 17 AGREEMENT. SAUD CHARACTERIZED ARAFAT AS BY FAR THE MOST POPULAR LEADER AMONG PALESTINIANS AND URGED THAT THE U.S. MOVE TOWARD HIM SO HE COULD SHOW THAT THE POLITICAL OPTION COULD PAY OFF. SAUD RECALLED THAT THE ARABS, EVEN SYRIA, HAD ACCEPTED RESOLUTION 242 AND AT FEZ IMPLICITLY CONCEDED ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST (IN TANDEM WITH PALESTINIAN "SELF-DETERMINATION"). ISRAEL HAD IN FACT IF NOT FORM SPURNED THE "TERRITORY FOR PEACE" PRINCIPLE. SAUD ASKED U.S. NOT TO ACQUIESCE IN CURRENT ISRAELI STRATEGY, WHICH ARAB OPINION BELIEVES IT IS DOING. END SUMMARY.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER SAUD RECEIVED SENATOR TOWER, CONGRESSMAN MCCAIN, COMMITTEE STAFFERS MCGOVERN AND LOCHE AND THE CHARGE FOR AN HOUR IN HIS RIYADH OFFICE ON FEBRUARY 15. IN RESPONSE TO THEIR QUESTIONS, HE PROVIDED THEM A THOUGHTFUL, HIGHLY ARTICULATE, AND UNEMOTIONAL ANALYSIS OF SAUDI POLICY TOWARD LEBANON AND THE PALESTINI QUESTION, EMPHASIZING AT SEVERAL POINTS THAT THE KINGDOM, AS A FRIEND OF THE U.S., SHARED ITS OBJECTIVES IN LEBANON AS THE ORIGINATOR OF THE FEZ PRINCIPLES, SAUDI ARABIA WAS NOT FAR FROM THE U.S. IN ITS APPROACH TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT, SAID SAUD. (FURTHER DIALOGUE SHOWED THAT EVEN WERE THE PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION QUESTION TO BE RESOLVED, SYRIAN OBSTINACY MIGHT BLOCK ARAB CONSENSUS.) THE CONVERSATION BEGAN WITH AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON TURKEY, WHICH THE CODEL HAD JUST VISITED. (SAUDI ARABIA EXPECTS TO RECEIVE PRESIDENT EVREN NEXT WEEK.) THE MINISTER AND THE SENATOR AGREED THAT PRESIDENT EVREN'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS HAD BEEN IMPRESSIVE; SAUD EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT TURKEY, ABLY LED BY EVREN AND THE NEW PRIME MINISTER AND STABLE AGAIN, COULD REVIVE ITS OLD AND VERY USEFUL LINKS WITH THE EAST AND THE WEST AND ALSO WITH THE ARAB STATES, INCLUDING THOSE OF NORTH AFRICA.

4. ASKED FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF LEBANESE EVENTS AND PROSPECTS, SAUD TURNED IN A GLOOMY ANALYSIS. HOPES OF A RESOLUTION BECAME DIMMER ALL THE TIME; EACH CHANCE FOR A BREAKTHROUGH IS FOLLOWED BY DETERIORATION. PRESIDENT GEMAYEL'S REFORM PROPOSALS COME PERHAPS TOO LATE. SAUD RECALLED THAT THE U.S. AND SAUDI ARABIA HAD WORKED HARD FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION WHICH WOULD BUTTRESS THE LEGITIMACY OF THE GOL. A CONSENSUS HAD EMERGED AT GENEVA. HAD GEMAYEL BUILT ON THAT, A PROCESS TO STRENGTHEN LEBANESE SOLIDARITY WOULD HAVE BEEN PUT IN MOTION. THIS FAILED TO OCCUR FOR TWO REASONS: NO WAY AROUND THE MAY 17 AGREEMENT COULD BE FOUND BY THE GOL AND THE USG; GEMAYEL HAD ATTEMPTED TO ASSERT HIS GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY OVER GREATER BEIRUT BY MILITARY MEANS, WHICH HAD ALIENATE THE SHIA AND DRUZE FROM THE GOL.

5. SAUD CONCEDED THAT JUMBLATT HAD PLAYED A ROLE IN THE FAILURE TO MAINTAIN THE CONSENSUS, BUT ARGUED THAT HAD GEMAYEL GONE TO WASHINGTON AFTER GENEVA WITH THE PACKAGE OF REFORM PROPOSALS HE HAS NOW ANNOUNCED HE WOULD HAVE GATHERED AROUND HIM A PREPONDERANT PROPORTION OF LEBANESE OPINION. INSTEAD, TIME WAS LOST, THE OPPOSITION GAINED STRENGTH, THE GOL LOST CREDIBILITY--EVEN WITH CHRISTIANS, SAID SAUD, CITING DANY CHAMOUN'S CRITICISM OF GEMAYEL. SAUD FEARED THAT THE CONSENSUS BEHIND THE GOL WHICH THE USG AND THE SAG HAD LABORED TO SUSTAIN PERHAPS COULD NOT BE REVIVED. PRESIDENT GEMAYEL MUST TACKLE THE TWO BIG PROBLEMS: THE MAY 17 PACT AND POLITICAL REFORMS.

6. ASKED BY REPRESENTATIVE MCCAIN WHETHER THE MARINE REDEPLOYMENT HAD BEEN A BLOW TO U.S. INFLUENCE IN THE REGION, SAUD REPLIED THAT THEIR REMAINING IN BEIRUT AND

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WITHDRAWING BOTH PRESENTED DRAWBACKS: HAD THEY STAYED, THEY WOULD HAVE BECOME MORE DEEPLY INVOLVED IN INTERNAL CONFLICTS; WERE THE U.S. TO BE PERCEIVED AS "CUTTING AND RUNNING", THAT WOULD ALSO HAVE HAD A NEGATIVE EFFECT. SAUD STATED THAT THE MARINE PRESENCE SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED IN ISOLATION. IF IT IS LINKED TO A PLAN FOR PEACE IN LEBANON, THE MARINES WOULD BE WELCOME (AS THEY WERE INITIALLY EVEN AMONG THE DRUZE AND SHIA, SAUD NOTED). IF THERE IS NO MOVEMENT TOWARD A POLITICAL SOLUTION, THEY BECOME PART OF THE PROBLEM. SAUD EMPHASIZED THAT THE EVENTUAL FATE OF LEBANON AND THE GOALS THE U.S. (AND SAUDI ARABIA) SEEK TO ACHIEVE THERE WILL AFFECT U.S. PRESTIGE IN THE REGION MORE THAN THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF THE MARINES. THE CREDIBILITY OF THE U.S. WILL BE INFLUENCED MORE BY ITS EFFORTS TO HELP LEBANON REGAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY, TO WHICH END THE MARINE AND OTHER MNF PRESENCE WAS ESSENTIALLY A MEANS.

7. SAUD RETRACED HIS VERSION OF THE HISTORY OF THE MARINE PRESENCE. THEY HAD LANDED FIRST TO PROTECT THE PALESTINIANS AFTER THE PLO FIGHTERS' WITHDRAWAL AS AMBASSADOR HABIB HAD PLEDGED; AFTER SABRA AND SHATILA, THEY RETURNED TO PROTECT THE REMAINING PALESTINIAN CIVILIANS. THEN THEIR ROLE EXPANDED AS THEY PROTECTED THEMSELVES; NO ONE OBJECTED. BUT THE SIZE OF THE DETACHMENT DID NOT EXPAND; THEY WERE "GIVEN MORE THAN THEY COULD CHEW" AND PLACED IN AN UNTENABLE POSITION--THEY WERE TOO FEW TO ACHIEVE ANY MILITARY OBJECTIVE BUT ENOUGH TO RISK INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANESE QUARRELS. IT WOULD BE "TRAGIC" FOR THE MARINES TO BECOME INVOLVED IN LEBANON'S INTER-NECINE CONFLICTS. IN SUM, SAUD ASSERTED, THE PRESTIGE AND CREDIBILITY OF THE U.S. IN THE ARAB WORLD WILL DEPEND ON WHETHER THE U.S. SUCCEEDS IN MODERATING ISRAELI POLICIES IN LEBANON AND ON THE WEST BANK, WHERE THE GOI SHOULD BE INDUCED BY THE U.S. TO MAKE PEACE ON THE BASIS OF UNSC RESOLUTION 242 AND THE REAGAN INITIATIVE. THESE ARE THE YARDSTICKS BY WHICH ARABS WILL MEASURE THE U.S.--THE MARINES' PRESENCE OR ABSENCE WOULD NOT BE A PRIMARY FACTOR FOR THE ARABS.

8. SENATOR TOWER ASKED SAUD'S REACTION WERE THE U.S. TO PERSUADE ISRAEL TO SUSPEND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MAY 17 PACT AS PART OF A PACKAGE DEAL. SAUD RESPONDED THAT THE AGREEMENT IS SUSPENDED NOW BECAUSE OF ITS LINKAGE TO SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL AND THE SYRIAN REFUSAL TO PULL BACK. IF IT CANNOT BE IMPLEMENTED, WHY INSIST ON KEEPING IT SINCE IT HAS BECOME A BURDEN TO GOL EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE RECONCILIATION?

9. RESPONDING TO FURTHER QUERIES, SAUD SAID SYRIA REFUSED AND THE ARAB WORLD DISAPPROVED OF THE MAY 17 AGREEMENT BECAUSE THE ARABS--EVEN SYRIA--HAD ACCEPTED THE IDEA OF PEACE WITH ISRAEL ON THE BASIS OF UNSC RESOLUTION 242 AND ITS "TERRITORY FOR PEACE" PRINCIPLE. THE REAGAN INITIATIVE IS A REFORMULATION OF 242. ISRAEL IN FACT AVOIDS NEGOTIATING A GENERAL RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT BECAUSE IT REFUSES TO DEAL WITH PALESTINIANS, WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF A PALESTINIAN STATE. INSTEAD, ISRAEL TAKES MILITARY ACTION AGAINST AN ARAB STATE, THEN NEGOTIATES ITS WITHDRAWAL AND PEACE WITH THAT STATE. EGYPT WAS FIRST, THEN LEBANON; SYRIA KNOWS IT IS NEXT ON THE LIST AFTER LEBANON IS NEUTRALIZED. THE MAY 17 AGREEMENT IN SAUD'S ANALYSIS DIMINISHES LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY IN THE SOUTH AND IN FACT GRANTS ISRAEL MILITARY HEGEMONY OVER ALL COUNTRIES ON ITS BORDERS. THUS THE SYRIANS REFUSE TO WITHDRAW NOT OUT OF OBSTINACY, NOR BECAUSE THEY ARE PRO-SOVIET, BUT OUT OF FEAR THAT ONCE THEY DO AND THE MAY 17 AGREEMENT IS IMPLEMENTED ISRAEL WILL TURN ON SYRIA.

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10. SLOWLY, SAID SAUD, ARAB OPINION IS COMING TO BELIEVE THAT IN PRACTICAL TERMS THE U.S. AGREES WITH THIS ISRAELI STRATEGY. ITS AID TO ISRAEL AND ITS ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL ACTIONS WHICH RUN COUNTER TO U.S. INTERESTS (SUCH AS THE GOI SETTLEMENT POLICY) NOURISH THE BELIEF THAT THE U.S. IS IN FACT HELPING ISRAEL ACHIEVE A SERIES OF SEPARATE PEACE TREATIES WHICH IN FACT REINFORCE ITS HEGEMONY-- DESPITE USG REFERENCE TO 242. AS A FRIEND OF THE U.S., SAUD UNDERScoreD, SAUDI ARABIA WANTS THE U.S. TO ACHIEVE A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE IN THE REGION.

11. SENATOR TOWER NOTED THAT DISUNITY IN THE ARAB WORLD COULD LEAD TO REJECTION BY AT LEAST SOME STATES OF ANY EVENTUAL SETTLEMENT. SAUD DEMURRED. ONLY LIBYA STANDS OUTSIDE THE ARAB CONSENSUS EMBODIED IN THE FEZ PRINCIPLES SYRIA NOT ONLY ACCEPTED AT FEZ WHAT SAUD CALLED "THE ARAB FORMULATION OF 242" BUT ALSO FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM HAD GONE TO THE U.S. WITH THE POST-FEZ ARAB DELEGATION TO SEE ABOUT BUILDING LINKS BETWEEN THE FEZ PRINCIPLES, 242, AND THE REAGAN INITIATIVE. THE SAUDIS HAVE NO DOUBTS ABOUT THE SYRIAN COMMITMENT TO THE FEZ PRINCIPLES, WHICH FOR EXAMPLE WAS REAFFIRMED IN THE SYRIAN DRAFTS FOR PRESENTATION TO THE ISLAMIC SUMMIT IN CASABLANCA. THUS THE PROBLEM IS NOT THE ARAB POSITION BUT THE TRUE ISRAELI STANCE AS EVIDENT IN THESE ACTIONS: THE SETTLEMEN PROGRAM IN FACT UNDERCUTS 242, ISRAEL REJECTS THE REAGAN INITIATIVE, THE ISRAELI INTERPRETATION OF THE CAMP DAVID PROVISIONS ON AUTONOMY FOR THE PALESTINIANS IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE U.S. OR EGYPT. THE NEED IS NOT TO EVOLVE A MODERATE ARAB POSITION BUT AN ISRAELI ONE.

12. SENATOR TOWER RECOUNTED THAT EVEN IF WE WERE TO MOVE ISRAEL, HE HAD BEEN TOLD BY KHADDAM THAT SYRIA IS NOT INTERESTED IN A SOLUTION IN WHICH KING HUSSEIN WOULD PLAY A MAJOR ROLE. SAUD, OBSERVING THAT KHADDAM HAD JOINED THE POST-FEZ DELEGATION LED BY HUSSEIN, SAID KHADDAM HAD BEEN "BLUSTERING", WHICH HAD TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM FACT.

13. COMMENTING ON REMARKS ABOUT ISRAELI POLITICS, SAUD ASSERTED THAT THE SAUDIS DO NOT DOUBT THAT THERE ARE ISRAELIS WHO SEE THE INJUSTICE AND THE DANGERS IN THE ISRAELI POSITION OF SEEKING A HEGEMONIC ARBITER ROLE. IT IS U.S. AID WHICH MAKES ISRAEL ARROGANT; WITH AN AIR FORCE LARGER THAN BRITAIN'S OR FRANCE'S IT CAN THREATEN ITS NEIGHBORS. NOTING A POLL SHOWING MOST ISRAELIS FAVOR CUTTING SETTLEMENT SUBSIDIES, TO WHICH SAUD MILDLY REPLIED HE WISHED A MAJORITY IN THE U.S. DID TOO, SENATOR TOWER EMPHASIZED THAT WHILE THE U.S. CONSIDERS ISRAEL A STRATEGIC ASSET WE DO NOT ALWAYS AGREE WITH TEL AVIV. SAUD CAUTIONED THAT ISRAEL'S SUPPORTERS SHOULD EXAMINE ISRAELI ACTIONS MORE CAREFULLY--IN THE LONG RUN THEY NOT ONLY FAIL TO SERVE U.S. INTERESTS BUT THREATEN TO BRING DOWN ISRAEL ITSELF, WHERE THE ECONOMIC SITUATION EVEN NOW IS ABNORMAL.

14. SOMETHING HAS TO CHANGE, SAID SAUD, AND THE FIRST THING SHOULD BE ISRAELI POLICIES--WHICH ONLY THE U.S. CAN ACCOMPLISH. THE THESIS THAT A STRONG AND SECURE ISRAEL WOULD BE MORE INCLINED TO MAKE CONCESSIONS FOR PEACE HAS BEEN PROVEN FALSE. THE MORE THE AID, THE GREATER THE AGGRESSION: THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS (WHICH FREED ISRAEL TO TURN TOWARD THE EASTERN FRONT) WERE FOLLOWED BY THE RAID ON THE IRAQI REACTOR, THE INVASION OF LEBANON, AND NOW DAILY THREATS AGAINST ARAB COUNTRIES INCLUDING SAUDI ARABIA. SAUD SAID THE ARABS DO NOT ASK THAT THE U.S. PROVIDE MILITARY ASSISTANCE SO THEY MAY IMPOSE A SETTLEMENT ON OR DESTROY ISRAEL; THEY ASK THAT THE ARAB-ISRAELI

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CONFLICT BE SETTLED ON THE BASIS OF RESOLUTION 242 PLUS THE APPLICATION OF "SELF-DETERMINATION" TO THE PALESTINIANS, SINCE THEY ARE TREATED ONLY AS REFUGEES IN THE RESOLUTION. THE U.S. AND THE ARABS AGREE TO A GREAT EXTENT; ISRAEL DOES NOT, AS IS SHOWN BY ITS FAILURE TO WITHDRAW, ITS REFUSAL TO DEAL SERIOUSLY WITH PALESTINIANS, ITS INCORPORATION OF THE GOLAN HEIGHTS.

15. SENATOR TOWER ASKED WHETHER SAUD FOUND ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE ISRAELIS' HAVING PERMITTED WEST BANK MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TO GO TO AMMAN. SAUD REPLIED THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD HOPED (IN VAIN) TO CREATE PROBLEMS BETWEEN THESE PALESTINIANS AND HUSSEIN BY OBLIGING THEM TO DECLARE A PALESTINIAN OR JORDANIAN NATIONALITY; SAUD ADDED THAT HE WOULD BE ENCOURAGED WERE THE ISRAELIS TO PERMIT PALESTINIANS TO ATTEND THE NEXT PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING, WHICH THEY HAVE ALWAYS REFUSED TO DO. OBSERVING THAT ARAFAT'S STOCK HAD RISEN A BIT IN THE U.S. AFTER HIS DEFEAT BY SYRIA, SENATOR TOWER ASKED SAUD'S VIEWS OF ARAFAT'S POSITION. SAUD SAID ARAFAT'S POPULARITY AMONG PALESTINIANS IN GAZA AND THE WEST BANK AND EVEN SYRIA REMAINED HIGH; HIS FEW OPPONENTS WERE HELD IN LOW REGARD. HOWEVER, THIS MIGHT PROVE TEMPORARY: IF THE STALEMATE REMAINS AND ARAFAT CANNOT SHOW THAT HIS CONTACTS WITH HUSSEIN AND MUBARAK ARE ACHIEVING RESULTS, HIS CREDIBILITY AND POPULARITY AMONG PALESTINIANS WILL DROP AND THEY WILL TURN TO THOSE FAVORING MILITARY AND TERRORIST ALTERNATIVES. TIMING IS THE KEY: NOW THAT ARAFAT IS FREE OF SYRIA AND THE USSR, THE U.S. SHOULD MAKE A BREAKTHROUGH IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE PLO.

16. TURNING TO CONGRESSMAN MCCAIN'S QUESTION BASED ON AMERICAN PERCEPTIONS OF SYRIAN OBSTINACY, SAUD SAID THAT HE DOES NOT SEE THE SYRIANS AS OPPOSED TO A SETTLEMENT IN LEBANON. THE SYRIANS HAD AGREED TO A PHASED, UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL ALONG WITH THE ISRAELIS IN A LETTER FROM ASSAD TO KING FAHD, AS AMBASSADOR HABIB HAD BEEN TOLD IN JIDDA A YEAR AGO. LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER WAZZAN HAD TOLD FAHD THAT THE MAY 17 AGREEMENT CONTAINED SECURITY PROVISIONS TO GO INTO IMMEDIATE EFFECT, WITH THE "NORMALIZATION" PROVISIONS TO BE DISCUSSED SIX MONTHS AFTER WITHDRAWAL. ASSAD HAD TOLD FAHD HE ACCEPTED THIS PROPOSAL PROVIDED SYRIAN AND LEBANESE, AS WELL AS ISRAELI, SECURITY WAS COVERED. THUS THE RECORD SHOWED SYRIA HAD NOT BEEN INTRANSIGENT, SAID SAUD.

17. IN CONCLUSION, SAUD TOLD HIS GUESTS THAT THE RECENT HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE EAST WAS A SERIES OF "LOST OPPORTUNITIES". HE URGED THAT THE U.S. NOT MISS THOSE PRESENTED BY THE CURRENT SITUATION, HOWEVER GLOOMY IT MIGHT SEEM.

18. BEIRUT MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. SUDDARTH  
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