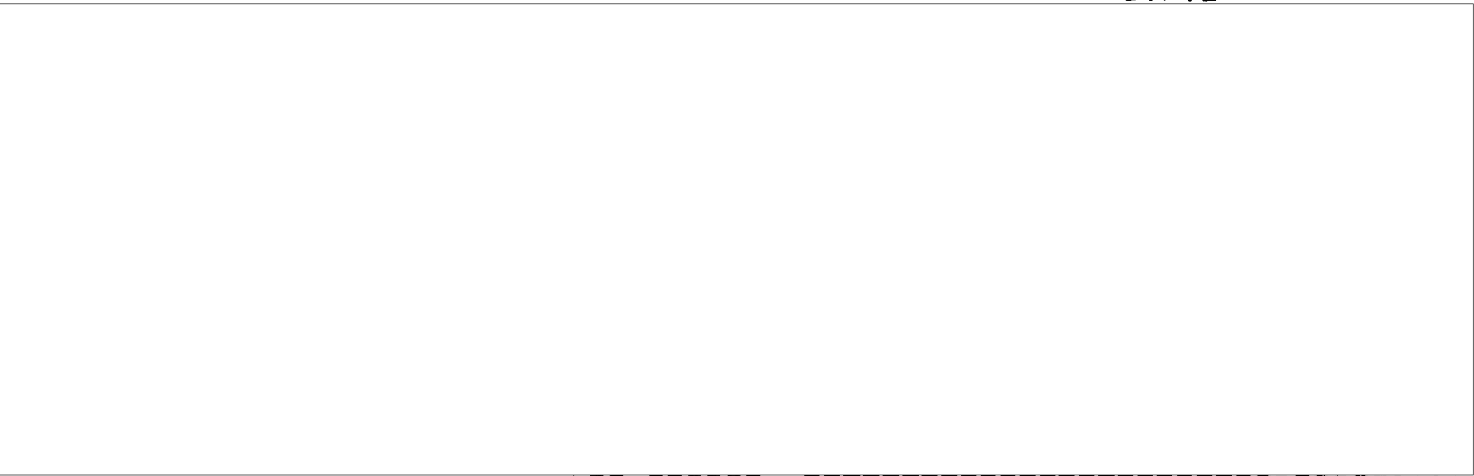


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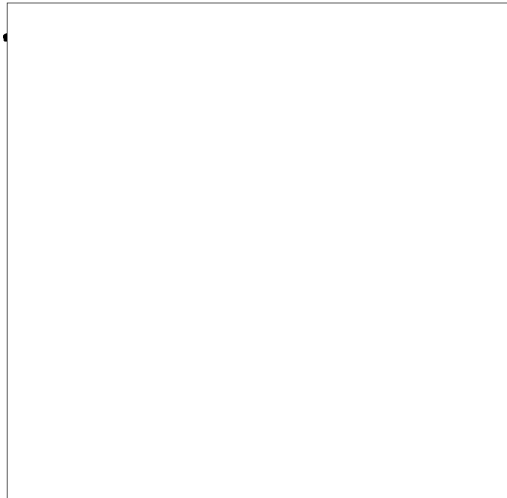
84 3395909 SCO

PAGE 001

NC 3395909

TOR: 161641Z FEB 84

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RUEHJ/AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE 7580
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EXDIS

E.O. 1235636 DECL: OADR
TAGS: MOPS, PREL, PGOV, PINS, SY, LE, US
SUBJECT: REP. FOWLER'S CALL ON SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER
- KHADDAM - FEBRUARY 15

REF: DAMASCUS 1199

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

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CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

84 3395909

SCO

PAGE 002

NC 3395909

TOR: 161441Z FEB 84

2. SUMMARY: SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM AFFIRMED TO CODEL FOWLER FEBRUARY 15 THAT IT WAS SYRIA'S POLICY IN THE WAKE OF THE DRUZE DEFEAT OF THE LAF TO ACHIEVE AN IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE, CONVENE AN "EXPANDED" NATIONAL DIALOGUE CONFERENCE AND TO REJECT THE IMPOSITION OF A POLITICAL SOLUTION BY MILITARY MEANS. KHADDAM INSISTED THAT BEFORE POLITICAL PROGRESS COULD BE MADE, GEMAYEL HAD TO ABROGATE THE MAY 17 AGREEMENT -- ABROGATION COULD NOT BE PART OF THE DIALOGUE CONFERENCE. JUST AS FIRMLY KHADDAM STATED THAT SYRIA WANTED GEMAYEL TO PLAY HIS ROLE AS PRESIDENT OF LEBANON DURING THE CURRENT SITUATION. KHADDAM ALSO CLAIMED THAT SYRIA IS HOLDING BACK THE DRUZE AND SHIA' FROM FURTHER MILITARY MOVES IN ORDER TO AVOID A WINNER/LOSER SITUATION, WHICH IN THEIR VIEW WOULD PRECLUDE A SETTLEMENT IN LEBANON. BECAUSE OF TIME CONSTRAINTS, AMBASSADOR WAS ABLE TO INTERVENE IN THIS DISCUSSION ONLY BRIEFLY. HE DISAGREED WITH KHADDAM'S CATALOGUE OF ALLEGED US POLICY ERRORS, ARGUED AGAINST MAKING MAY 17 ABRUGATION A PRE-CONDITION TO RESUMPTION OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION DIALOGUE AND WARNED THAT US WOULD DEFEND ITS FORCES IN LEBANON.

3. FONMIN KHADDAM RECEIVED CONGRESSMAN WYCHE FOWLER FOR 90 MINUTES AT 1100 LT FEB 15. AMBASSADOR, POLCOUNS AND POLOFF ACCOMPANIED. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING ARE CONTAINED IN REFTEL. FOLLOWING IS FULL MEMCON.

4. ASKED HOW SARG NOW VIEWS THE LEBANESE SITUATION, FOLLOWING THE PSP MILITARY ADVANCES THAT PREVIOUS EVENING, KHADDAM SAID THAT SYRIA'S BASIC PROBLEM IS THAT THE USG HAS NOT TRIED TO UNDERSTAND THE FACTS. THE RESULT HAS BEEN BAD FOR LEBANON AND FOR THE USG'S REGIONAL REPUTATION. FOR EXAMPLE, PRESIDENT REAGAN HAS RECENTLY SAID THE MARINES WOULD REMAIN TO BUILD UP THE LAF SO THAT IT WOULD BE ABLE TO FACE 75,000 SYRIAN TROOPS. IN FACT, THE PROBLEM WAS NOT THE U.S. VERSUS THE SYRIAN ARMY AND IN ANY CASE THE LEBANESE ARMY HAS DISINTEGRATED. SYRIA HAS WARNED THE USG, INCLUDING RUMSFELD, MANY TIMES THAT THE LAF WOULD COLLAPSE IF IT ENGAGED IN COMBAT. THE LAF ATTACKED THE SOUTHERN SUBURBS AND IT HAS NOW DIVIDED. THE BRUTAL SHELLING ON SOUTH BEIRUT HAS MADE A 100,000 HOMELESS. SYRIA WARNED RUMSFELD TO HAVE AMIN KEEP THE ARMY OUT OF THE WAR -- ALL

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

84 3395909

SCO

PAGE 003

NC 3395909

TOR: 161641Z FEB 84

OF THIS CALAMITY COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED IF RUMSFELD HAD PRESSED GEMAYEL TO ACCEPT THE SECURITY PLAN AND PROMOTE THE DRUZE OFFICERS. ARTILLERY CANNOT, REPEAT NOT, SOLVE A PROBLEM WHICH SPRINGS FROM THE NECESSITY TO RECREATE CONFSSIONAL BALANCE. USG SHOULD NOT HAVE EMBROILED ITSELF ON ONE SIDE, THE SIDE OF A SMALL FASCIST MINORITY WHICH HAS NOW DRIVEN 25,000 ARMY MEMBERS INTO THE OPPOSITION.

5. KHADDAM SAID SARG HAS NOW ADVISED THE OPPOSITION TO STOP ITS MILITARY OPPOSITION AT THE PRESENT LIMIT. THIS IS BECAUSE SYRIA BELIEVES SOLUTION CANNOT COME BY THE VICTORY OF ONE SIDE OVER ANOTHER. SARG IS PLEASED WITH CERTAIN SUCCESSES ACHIEVED BY THE OPPOSITION, BUT RECONCILIATION MUST BE BASED ON BALANCE AND AVOIDING A WINNER/LOSER OUTCOME. SYRIA WILL THEREFORE CONTINUE ITS POLICY WHICH IS BASED ON THE NEED FOR CEASEFIRE, A NATIONAL DIALOGUE CONFERENCE, AND REJECTION OF THE NOTION THAT POLITICAL SOLUTION CAN BE IMPOSED BY MILITARY MEANS. NATIONAL DIALOGUE IS CRITICAL. SYRIA SUPPORTS THE OPPOSITION VIEW THAT THERE MUST BE ABRIGATION OF THE MAY 17 AGREEMENT AND THE LEBANESE MUST MEET AT ONE TABLE "ON EQUAL FOOTING."

6. ASKED WHAT SYRIAN GOALS WERE IN LEBANON, KHADDAM SAID SYRIA HAS ABSOLUTELY NO TERRITORIAL DESIGNS; TALK OF ANNEXATION OR "GREATER SYRIA" IN THIS CONNECTION IS ISRAELI BLACKMAIL. ISRAEL WANTS A GREATER ISRAEL. SYRIA WANTS A SOVEREIGN AND INDEPENDENT LEBANESE STATE WITH WHICH IT WOULD CONTINUE TO ENJOY A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP. LIKEWISE, SYRIA HAS NO POLITICAL DESIGNS IN LEBANON BUT SEEKS NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. FURTHER, SYRIA HAS NO ECONOMIC DESIGNS; ON THE CONTRARY, THE LEBANESE DEPEND ON A LARGE MARKET IN SYRIA FOR THEIR PRODUCE. A STRONG LEBANON IS IN SYRIA'S INTEREST AND SINCE THE WAR BEGAN

EXDIS

E.O. 1235636 DECL: OADR

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SUBJECT: REP. FOWLER'S CALL ON SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

84 3395909

SCO

PAGE 004

NC 3395909

TUR: 161641Z FEB 84

IN 1975, SYRIA HAS CONSISTENTLY ADVOCATED A SOVEREIGN LEBANON.

7. REP FOWLER ASKED HOW THE DOMESTIC REFORM PROBLEM COULD BE SOLVED: BY A NEW NATIONAL PACT? BY A GNU WITH GEMAYEL? WITHOUT HIM? KHADDAM SAID THE BASIC FACT WHICH MUST BE UNDERSTOOD IS THAT THERE WILL BE NO STABILITY IF ANY LEBANESE REGIME IS DOMINATED BY A SINGLE SIDE. SYRIA SEES NOTHING WHICH "WOULD PREVENT A GNU WITH GEMAYEL AS PRESIDENT."

8. ACKNOWLEDGING THE CONGRESSMAN'S POINT THAT JUMBLATT AND BARRI HAVE CALLED FOR GEMAYEL'S OUSTER, KHADDAM SAID THAT THEY HAVE THEIR OWN SPECIAL CONCERNS STEMMING FROM THE TREMENDOUS DAMAGE DONE IN THE SHUF AND SOUTH BEIRUT. SYRIA, HOWEVER, BELIEVES ALL, REPEAT ALL, PARTIES SHOULD SIT AND TALK.

9. THE CONGRESSMAN ASKED WHAT COMMITMENTS SYRIA WOULD MAKE TO WITHDRAW FOLLOWING THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN FORCES AND WHETHER SYRIA WOULD ENTER INTO AN INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENT TO INSURE LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY INCLUDING A PROHIBITION ON THE PRESENCE OF ANY FOREIGN FORCES OR TERRORIST ORGANIZATION. KHADDAM SAID SYRIA HAD SUPPORTED LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY SINCE 1943. HE SAID THAT IRONICALLY SYRIAN INFLUENCE THERE WAS STRONGER PRIOR TO THE ENTRANCE OF SYRIAN TROOPS. SYRIA'S INFLUENCE IN LEBANON IS, IN FACT, NOT DEPENDENT ON MILITARY PRESENCE. AS SOON AS MAY 17 IS ABROGATED AND MNF AND IDF WITHDRAWAL COMPLETED, THERE IS NO NEED FOR SYRIAN MILITARY PRESENCE AND SYRIA WOULD RESPOND IMMEDIATELY TO A GOL REQUEST TO WITHDRAW.

10. CONGRESSMAN FOWLER PRESSED KHADDAM ON THE IDEA OF AN INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEE. KHADDAM SAID HE HAD NOT HEARD SUCH A SUGGESTION BEFORE, AND IT HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED WITHIN SARG. HE COULD NOT THEREFORE RESPOND AT PRESENT TO THE IDEA OF AN INTERNATIONAL PACT.

11. THERE FOLLOWED AN EXCHANGE DURING WHICH THE CONGRESSMAN SOUGHT TO ELICIT SYRIAN VIEWS ON THE EXISTENCE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

64 3395909

SCO

PAGE 005

NC 3395909

TOR: 161641Z FEB 84

OF LEGITIMATE INTERESTS IN LEBANON AND THE REGION BY THE USG AND THE USSR. KHADDAM SAID EVERY COUNTRY HAS AN INTEREST IN EVERY OTHER COUNTRY, AS LONG AS THERE IS NO EFFORT TO IMPOSE HEGEMONY OR EXPLOIT RESOURCES.

12. THE CONGRESSMAN ASKED WHAT THE MAJOR IMPEDIMENTS ARE TO BETTER SYRIAN-U.S. RELATIONS. KHADDAM SAID NO OBSTACLE HAS BEEN PLACED IN THE ROAD BY SYRIA. WHEN THE CONGRESSMAN PRESSED, KHADDAM SAID IT IS THE USG WHICH IS PROVOKING SYRIA; SARG HAS NOT GONE TO MEXICO TO PROVOKE THE USG. SYRIA DOES WANT BETTER RELATIONS ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND NON-INTERFERENCE IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. THE USG SHOULD ACT IN THE REGION LIKE THE SUPERPOWER IT IS, I.E., IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PEACE AS DEFINED BY THE UN CHARTER.

13. KHADDAM SAID THERE ARE TWO PROBLEMS BETWEEN US. FIRST, THE "HOT" LEBANESE ISSUE, WHERE THE AMERICAN ROLE SHOULD BE TRANSFORMED INTO A POSITIVE ONE BY WITHDRAWING U.S. TROOPSN MOVING THE FLEET OFFSHORE, HELPING TO PUSH THE VARIOUS PARTIES INTO A DIALOGUE, AND "NOT PRESSING GEMAYEL TO PREVENT HIM FROM GETTING RID OF THE MAY 17 AGREEMENT" (I.E., ALLOWING GEMAYEL TO ABROGATE THE AGREEMENT). SECOND, THE OVERALL MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE, WHERE THE U.S. WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE DIFFICULTY BEING A MEDIATOR AS LONG AS U.S. POLICY IN THE AREA IS THE SAME AS ISRAELI POLICY. HE POINTED OUT THAT BETWEEN GOOD RELATIONS AND BAD RELATIONS EXISTS THE STATE OF NORMAL RELATIONSN, WHICH PREVAILED BETWEEN THE U.S. AND SYRIA FOR SOME YEARS. NOW, THE U.S. WAS WAVING THE BIG STICK AT SYRIA WHICH WAS UNACCEPTABLE.

EXDIS

E.O. 1235636 DECL: OADR

TAGS: MUPS, PREL, PGOV, PINS, SY, LE, US

SUBJECT: REP. FOWLER'S CALL ON SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

14. CONGRESSMAN FOWLER ASKED IF THERE WERE ANY OTHER OBSTACLES TO EGYPT'S REENTRY TO THE ARAB LEAGUE BESIDES THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENT. KHADDAM REPLIED "NONE AT ALL". THE CONGRESSMAN AND KHADDAM THEN ENGAGED IN A LONG DIS-

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

84 3395909

SCO

PAGE 006

NC 3395909

TUR: 161641Z FEB 84

CUSSION OVER THE GREAT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SYRIA'S GOAL OF ARAB UNITY AND ITS ACTUAL ISOLATION FROM MOST OF THE ARAB COUNTRIES. IN ESSENCE, KHADDAM MAINTAINED THAT SYRIA RECOGNIZED THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LONG TERM IDEOLOGICAL GOALS AND SHORT TERM POLITICAL REALITIES.

15. CONGRESSMAN FOWLER THEN RAISED WHAT HE CALLED A SENSITIVE POLITICAL ISSUE WHICH CONCERNED MANY AMERICANS, NAMELY THE POSSIBILITY OF A COMPLETE PRISONER EXCHANGE BETWEEN SYRIA AND ISRAEL ALONG WITH AN ACCOUNTING OF MIA'S. HE SAID THE U.S. CONGRESS HOPED TO SEE AN EXCHANGE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. KHADDAM SAID THAT SYRIA WANTED AN EXCHANGE BUT THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE BLOCKING PROGRESS. HE SAID THAT THE U.S. HAD PROPOSED THE EXCHANGE TO THE SYRIANS WHO HAD ACCEPTED AND WERE NOW WAITING FOR A REPLY FROM ISRAEL VIA THE ICRC. KHADDAM SAW SOME VALUE IN FOWLER'S SUGGESTION THAT SYRIA MAKE A CLEAR PUBLIC STATEMENT OF ITS WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE A PRISONER EXCHANGE.

16. CONGRESSMAN FOWLER THEN NOTED THAT PERHAPS SYRIA'S EXPERIENCE WITH THE 1974 GOLAN DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT COULD BE APPLIED TO SOUTHERN LEBANON. HE APPRECIATED THE FACT THAT SYRIA HAD KEPT ITS WORD ON BLOCKING GUERRILLA INFILTRATION ACROSS THE SYRIAN BORDER. KHADDAM, AROUSED, IMMEDIATELY CONTRADICTED FOWLER, SAYING THAT KISSINGER HAD PROPOSED A SYRIAN PLEDGE ON INFILTRATION BUT THAT THE SYRIANS HAD REJECTED THE IDEA AS PART OF THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT.

17. AT THIS POINT THE AMBASSADOR INTERJECTED THAT AS THE PRESIDENT'S REPRESENTATIVE IN SYRIA HE HAD TO STATE THAT HE COULD NOT AGREE WITH KHADDAM'S CATALOG OF U.S. POLICY "ERRORS", BUT HE WANTED TO DISCUSS WITH KHADDAM WHAT WAS GOING ON IN LEBANON AT THE MOMENT. HE NOTED THAT THE U.S. AND SYRIA OFTEN HAVE A UNITY OF VIEWS ON WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN IN LEBANON TO MOVE TOWARD A SETTLEMENT. HE WAS PLEASED TO HEAR KHADDAM SAY THAT AMIN GEMAYEL MUST PLAY HIS ROLE AS PRESIDENT IN THE CURRENT SITUATION; THAT THERE SHOULD BE A CEASEFIRE IMMEDIATELY; AND THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE A MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE LEBANESE PROBLEM. WITH ALL THIS IN MIND, THE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

84 3395909

SCO

PAGE 007

NC 3395909

TOR: 161641Z FEB 84

AMBASSADOR ASKED: WHY DID JUMBLATT ATTACK WHILE SOME POLITICAL PROGRESS APPEARED TO BE IN THE OFFING?

18. KHADDAM SAID THE ATTACK WAS A (PSD) REPLY TO PRESIDENT REAGAN'S STATEMENT IN WHICH HE SAID THAT THE U.S. WOULD FIGHT ON THE SIDE OF GEMAYEL, WHO HAD ATTACKED THE CIVILIAN POPULATION OF THE SOUTHERN SUBURBS AND DRIVEN OUT 100,000 CITIZENS. THIS LED GEMAYEL'S OPPONENTS TO BELIEVE THAT THE ARMY HAD TO BE BROKEN UP. KHADDAM SAID THAT THE SYRIANS HAD TOLD EVERY U.S. ENVOY THAT THE USE OF THE LAF AGAINST LEBANESE CITIZENS WOULD LEAD TO ITS COLLAPSE. KHADDAM ARGUED THAT THE U.S. SHOULD BEAR ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LAF COLLAPSE AND ASSERTED THAT ALL OF THE AMERICAN WARSHIPS COULD NOT IMPOSE A POLITICAL SOLUTION IN LEBANON -- LEBANON IS NOT GRENADA.

19. CONTINUING IN A FAIRLY EMOTIONAL TONE, KHADDAM ASKED RHETORICALLY IF SYRIA SHOULD ACT MORE RESPONSIBLY THAN A SUPER POWER. "DO YOU THINK WE COULD NOT RESPOND WHEN THE NEW JERSEY SHELLS US LAST WEEK? WE DO NOT WANT AN ESCALATION. WE HAVE NOT YET CROSSED THE POINT OF NO RETURN AND WE CAN STILL ACHIEVE WHAT WE BOTH WANT." KHADDAM SAID HE HAD READ UNDER SECRETARY EAGLEBURGER'S RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENT AND HAD FOUND IT TO BE ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF U.S. IRRESPONSIBILITY. KHADDAM WAS ALSO DISAPPOINTED WITH SECRETARY SHULTZ'S ATTITUDE SINCE THE LATTER KNOWS THE MIDDLE EAST AND KHADDAM HAD THOUGHT IN THE COURSE OF THEIR PERSONAL MEETINGS THAT SHULTZ HAD A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS.

20. THE AMBASSADOR AGREED THAT THE BIG STICK DIDN'T WORK IN LEBANON AND ASKED WHY OTHERS LIKE THE DRUZE WERE TRYING TO USE IT IN A WAY WHICH DAMAGED ONGOING POLITICAL ACTIVITY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM THERE. KHADDAM RETORTED THAT THE LAF ATTACKS ON THE SOUTHERN SUBURBS WERE INTOLERABLE IN THE EYES OF THE LEBANESE OPPOSITION. KHADDAM AGREED THAT MORE FIGHTING WOULD NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM BUT HE POINTED OUT THAT THE OPPOSITION'S RESPONSE

EXDIS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

84 3395909 SCD

PAGE 008

NC 3395909

TOR: 161641Z FEB 84

E.O. 1235636 DECL: OADR
 TAGS: MOPS, PREL, PGOV, PINS, SY, LE, US
 SUBJECT: REP. FOWLER'S CALL ON SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

TO THE SOUTHERN SUBURBS ATTACK WAS UNDERSTANDABLE. KHADDAM CLAIMED THAT THE SYRIANS HAD PREVENTED THE DRUZE FROM LAUNCHING OPERATIONS FROM SYRIAN-CONTROLLED TERRITORY (I.E., THE METN) AND THAT THEY WERE CURRENTLY RESTRAINING THE DRUZE AND SHI'A SO THAT THERE WOULD BE NO WINNER AND NO LOSER IN LEBANON.

21. KHADDAM FLATLY ASSERTED THAT THE SYRIANS ARE NOT INSISTING ON GEMAYEL'S RESIGNATION BUT THAT GEMAYEL MUST ACT AS THE NSF HAS DECIDED -- FIRST, ABROGATION OF THE MAY 17 AGREEMENT, THEN AN "EXPANDED" GENEVA SUMMIT WHICH COULD MEET WITHIN A WEEK, AND THEN FORMATION OF A GNU. DESPITE THE AMBASSADOR'S ARGUMENTS THAT THE AGREEMENT BE PART OF THE POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS, KHADDAM INSISTED THAT ABROGATION HAD TO BE THE FIRST STEP.

22. FINALLY, THE AMBASSADOR TOLD KHADDAM HE WISHED TO RETURN TO THE LATTER'S COMMENT ABOUT "A BIG STICK". SYRIA SHOULD BE IN NO DOUBT THAT THE USG WILL ITSELF USE A BIG STICK IN LEBANON IF BIG STICKS ARE USED AGAINST OUR FORCES.

23. MEETING WAS TERMINATED BECAUSE KHADDAM WAS CALLED TO AIRPORT TO MEET UNEXPECTED FRG VISITOR FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS.

24. THIS MESSAGE WAS NOT CLEARED BY CONGRESSMAN FOWLER.

25. BEIRUT MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. PAGANELLI

END OF MESSAGE

CONFIDENTIAL