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FM WASHINGTON 030028Z JUL 82
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 2340 OF 2 JULY
INFO IMMEDIATE TEL AVIV, CAIRO, UKMIS NEW YORK, JEDDA, PARIS AND
AMMAN

MS

ISRAEL/LEBANON

1. EAGLEBURGER HAS TOLD US THAT HE HAS BEEN ON THE TELEPHONE TO HABIB ALL DAY. HABIB BELIEVES THAT THERE IS NOW A POSSIBILITY OF A BREAK-THROUGH, AS THE PLO APPEAR TO HAVE ACCEPTED THAT THEY WILL HAVE TO LEAVE WEST BEIRUT WITHOUT MILITARY EQUIPMENT EXCEPT FOR THEIR PERSONAL ARMS. THE LEBANESE HAVE BEEN MUCH FIRMER IN THEIR RECENT EXCHANGES WITH THEM. THE TA'IF MEETING YESTERDAY HAD NOT SOUGHT TO OPPOSE A SOLUTION ON THESE LINES, THANKS TO THE ATTITUDE TAKEN BY THE LEBANESE, AND BY THE SAUDIS WITH WHOM THE AMERICANS WERE IN VERY CLOSE TOUCH.
2. THERE WERE TWO MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCKS. THE PLAN DEPENDED ON THE AMERICANS BEING ABLE TO PUT TOGETHER A MULTINATIONAL FORCE TO SUPERVISE AND HELP POLICE THE CITY WHILE THE PLO HANDED OVER THEIR ARMS TO THE LEBANESE; AND TO REASSURE THE MUSLIM POPULATION THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE ATTACKED BY THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS. THE AMERICANS DID NOT ENVISAGE SUCH A FORCE REMAINING IN BEIRUT FOR MORE THAN THIRTY DAYS. THEY WOULD NOT BE PRESSING US TO PARTICIPATE. THE PRESIDENT HAD NOT YET TAKEN A DECISION AS TO WHETHER THE AMERICANS WOULD DO SO; A RECOMMENDATION THAT THEY SHOULD WAS BEING PUT TO HIM THIS EVENING. THE AMERICANS WOULD BE TRYING TO PUT TOGETHER A US/FRENCH FORCE AND WERE IN TOUCH WITH THE FRENCH ABOUT THIS.
3. THE OTHER MAJOR DIFFICULTY WAS WHERE TO PUT THE 5,000 OR SO ARMED PLO. THE LEBANESE WERE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO SENDING THEM TO SYRIA, AS WERE THE AMERICANS, AS THIS WOULD SIMPLY LEAD TO FRESH INFILTRATION. THEY WERE TRYING TO GET MUBARAK TO ACCEPT THEM. AS WITH OTHER ARAB PROTECTORS OF THE PLO, MUBARAK WAS DOING HIS UTMOST TO AVOID HAVING THEM ON HIS TERRITORY. THE SAUDIS AND JORDANIANS HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN URGING HIM TO AGREE.
4. EAGLEBURGER EMPHASIZED THAT ALL THIS WAS AT A VERY DELICATE STAGE. THE AMERICANS DID NOT KNOW IF THE FRENCH WOULD AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN A FORCE; AND IF MUBARAK WOULD AGREE TO RECEIVE THE PLO. THE SAUDIS HAD OFFERED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WITH THEIR RE-LOCATION. HABIB COULD NOT GUARANTEE THAT A SOLUTION ON THESE LINES COULD BE ACHIEVED. BUT HE WAS SAYING THAT HE COULD NOT ACHIEVE ONE UNLESS THE PROBLEMS OF THE DESTINATION FOR THE PLO AND A MONITORING FORCE WERE SOLVED QUICKLY.

SECRET

5. WE ASKED ABOUT THE PALESTINIAN DEMAND FOR A RESIDUAL POLITICAL PRESENCE IN WEST BEIRUT. EAGLEBURGER SAID THAT THE LEBANESE AND THE AMERICANS COULD ACCEPT THIS, THOUGH THERE WOULD BE FIERCE RESISTANCE FROM THE ISRAELIS. THE AMERICANS WERE BEING TOLD BY EVERYONE THAT THE PLO MUST NOT BE HUMILIATED AND MUST THEREFORE BE ALLOWED TO RETAIN SOME RESIDUAL ARMED PRESENCE IN THE LEBANON. THERE WERE ABOUT 300 PLO WITH ARMS IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY. IF THEY RE-GROUPED THE AMERICANS COULD FOR THEIR PART ACQUIESCE IN THEIR REMAINING.

6. EAGLEBURGER SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THE AMERICANS HAD NOT YET GONE THROUGH ALL THIS IN DETAIL WITH THE ISRAELIS. THEY WOULD HAVE TO BEGIN TO DO SO TOMORROW, BEFORE THE ISRAELI CABINET MET ON SUNDAY. THERE WOULD THEN BE A TREMENDOUS ROW AND ALL SORTS OF LEAKS FROM JERUSALEM. EAGLEBURGER SAID THAT THE FRENCH HAD BEEN INFORMED OF MOST OF THE ABOVE. IN DOING SO THE AMERICANS HAD MADE CLEAR TO THEM WHAT THEY THOUGHT OF THE FRANCO/EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE IN NEW YORK. IF THE FRENCH CONTINUED WITH IT, THE AMERICANS WOULD VETO. IT WAS CRUCIAL TO AVOID ANY ACTION THAT COULD LEAD TO A BREAKDOWN OF HABIB'S NEGOTIATIONS. THE FRENCH HAD AGREED THAT THEY WOULD NOT PURSUE THIS IN NEW YORK AT ANY RATE UNTIL TUESDAY. THE LEBANESE WERE STRONGLY AGAINST THE FRENCH MOVE, FOR THE SAME REASON AS THE AMERICANS.

7. EAGLEBURGER MADE CLEAR THAT THE AMERICANS SAW HABIB'S EFFORTS, WHICH HAD NOW REACHED A CRITICAL STAGE, AS THE ONLY POSSIBILITY OF AVOIDING A BLOOD BATH IN WEST BEIRUT. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE ABOVE WAS BEING TOLD US IN STRICT CONFIDENCE HE ASKED THAT IT SHOULD NOT BE QUOTED TO OTHER US OFFICIALS, STILL LESS TO OTHER GOVERNMENTS.

8. FCO PLEASE PASS TO BEIRUT.

HENDERSON

LIMITED
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