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FM WASHINGTON 132035Z JUL 83

TO PRIORITY F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1964 OF 13 JULY

INFO PRIORITY BEIRUT, DAMASCUS, AMMAN, TEL AVIV, JEDDA, CAIRO AND UKMIS NEW YORK

INFO ROUTINE MOSCOW PARIS ROME OTHER MIDDLE EAST POSTS

MIPT (NOT TO ALL):

SHULTZ'S BRIEFING OF ALLIED AMBASSADORS: MIDDLE EAST

1. SHULTZ SAID THAT HE HAD DECIDED TO VISIT THE MIDDLE EAST ON HIS WAY BACK FROM ASIA BECAUSE OF THE NEED TO HEAR AT FIRST HAND THE POSITION OF THE PARTIES, PARTICULARLY THE SYRIANS. THE PRESIDENT HAD DECIDED, THEREFORE, THAT HE SHOULD GO. HE HAD FOUND THE SAUDIS PREOCCUPIED ABOUT LEBANON, BUT NO LESS SO WITH THE PEACE PROCESS AND THE PLIGHT OF THE PALESTINIANS.

2. THE LEBANESE LEADERS FACED THE TASK OF TRYING TO RID THREE QUARTERS OF THEIR COUNTRY OF FOREIGN TROOPS. GEMAYEL, WAZZAN, SALEM AND WADI HADDAD HAD IMPRESSED HIM AS PATRIOTS, TAKING CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL RISKS, THEY DESERVED SUPPORT.

3. IN SYRIA HIS FIVE HOURS OF DISCUSSION WITH ASAD HAD BEEN PERSONALLY CORDIAL, BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO AGREEMENT ON SUBSTANCE. THE REAL PROBLEM WAS THAT THE SYRIANS WERE OPPOSED TO THE ISRAELI/LEBANON AGREEMENT NOT MERELY BECAUSE OF THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT BUT MORE FUNDAMENTALLY: THEY DID NOT ACCEPT THAT ANY ARAB COUNTRY SHOULD MAKE AN AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL AT ALL. THERE NEVERTHELESS HAD BEEN FULL DISCUSSION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE AGREEMENT. THE SYRIANS HAD LEGITIMATE SECURITY CONCERNS. THE US WAS PREPARED TO LOOK AT THESE, TO SEE IF THEY COULD BE MET. ASAD HAD AGREED THAT SHULTZ MIGHT SAY PUBLICLY THAT HE SHARED THE GOAL OF AN INDEPENDENT SOVEREIGN LEBANON, WITH CONTROL OVER ALL ITS TERRITORY AND A STRONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. A JOINT US/SYRIAN WORKING GROUP AT OFFICIAL LEVEL HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED. ITS IMPORTANCE SHOULD NOT BE EXAGGERATED. IT REFLECTED AGREEMENT THAT A DIALOGUE SHOULD CONTINUE AND PROVIDED A CHANNEL FOR IT: BUT NO MORE THAN THAT.

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*A good summary of
the present U.S. view
on the Middle East.*

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4. THE ISRAELIS WERE NOW SET ON RE-DEPLOYMENT. THIS POSED A DILEMMA. THE AMERICANS WANTED THE ISRAELIS TO WITHDRAW AND COULD SCARCELY OPPOSE THEIR RELINQUISHMENT OF TERRITORY. BUT THERE WAS A DANGER THAT PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL WOULD SIMPLY LEAD TO THEIR DIGGING IN FOR A LONG STAY IN SOUTH LEBANON AND TO PARTITION OF THE COUNTRY, WHICH THE US OPPOSED. IT WOULD BE DIFFERENT IF PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL WERE PART OF A PROGRAMME FOR COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL. THIS WOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH GEMAYEL AND BEGIN ON THEIR FORTHCOMING VISITS TO WASHINGTON. THERE WOULD, SHULTZ EMPHASISED, BE FULL AND CAREFUL CONSULTATION WITH THE OTHER CONTRIBUTORS TO THE MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE.

5. THE PRESENT SITUATION WITH ISRAELI AND SOVIET-BACKED SYRIAN FORCES IN CLOSE PROXIMITY WAS RISKY, AND WAS COMPLICATED BY THE NUMBER OF ARMED GROUPS. THE TERRORIST GROUPS IN PARTICULAR HAD AN INTEREST IN CONTINUED CONFLICT. THE SYRIAN EFFORT TO DOMINATE THE PLO WAS MEETING RESISTANCE IN OTHER PARTS OF THE ARAB WORLD AND THE OUTCOME REMAINED TO BE SEEN.

6. SHULTZ SAID THAT THE PEACE PROCESS WAS HELD UP BY THE DIFFICULTY OF DECISION-MAKING IN THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT AND THE INABILITY TO GIVE KING HUSSEIN A BASIS ON WHICH TO MOVE FORWARD. HUSSEIN WAS FRUSTRATED: HE WANTED TO ENGAGE IN NEGOTIATIONS BUT NEEDED THE RIGHT CONDITIONS TO MAKE THEM FRUITFUL. SHULTZ SAID THAT THE KEY ARAB LEADERS ALL RECOGNISED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE AND THAT TIME WAS WORKING AGAINST THEM. HE HOPED THAT THE KIND OF FORMULA WHICH HAD SO NEARLY BEEN AGREED BETWEEN KING HUSSEIN AND ARAFAT IN APRIL COULD SOMEHOW BE RECREATED.

WRIGHT

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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ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE