

Prime Directive

Read in full.

So much for R.

Buch's insistence that we  
should not divulge  
the information!

A-J-C-6/7.

GR 450

CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 052333Z JUL 83

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1878 OF 5 JULY

INFO PRIORITY BEIRUT, DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV, MUSCAT,

ROUTINE CAIRO, JEDDA, UKMIS NEW YORK, PARIS, ROME, MOSCOW, MODUK

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ISRAEL/LEBANON

1. THE MEDIA HERE HAVE GIVEN PROMINENCE TO A STORY FIRST LEAKED TO THE MIDDLE EAST POLICY SURVEY LAST WEEK THAT HABIB SUGGESTED TO THE ISRAELIS THAT THEY SHOULD CONSIDER SETTING A TIMETABLE FOR UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON.

2. PENDLETON (STATE DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR FOR ISRAEL) HAS TOLD US IN CONFIDENCE THAT HABIB, WITH THE APPROVAL OF SHULTZ AND THE WHITE HOUSE, PUT THIS TO THE ISRAELIS AS AN OPTION WORTHY OF CONSIDERATION, THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF AMERICAN PRESSURE ON THE ISRAELIS TO ACCEPT IT. THE ISRAELIS, PREDICTABLY, HAD BEEN VERY UNENTHUSIASTIC, NOT LEAST BECAUSE THE PROPOSAL WAS VERY CLOSE TO WHAT THE ISRAELI LABOUR PARTY ARE ADVOCATING. HABIB'S APPROACH DID HOWEVER SEEM TO HAVE STIMULATED THE ISRAELIS TO NEW THINKING ABOUT POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARD. BUT THIS PROCESS HAD BEEN STOPPED BY THE LEAK: THE ISRAELIS WERE DETERMINED TO DO NOTHING TO REINFORCE THE SYRIAN IMPRESSION THAT ALL THEY HAVE TO DO IS SIT TIGHT. PENDLETON AGREED THAT THE LEAK, ALMOST CERTAINLY FROM AN AMERICAN SOURCE, HAD SET BACK THE PROSPECTS FOR A SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL.

3. THE STATE DEPARTMENT BELIEVE THAT THE ISRAELI CABINET IS LIKELY SOON TO TAKE A DECISION IN PRINCIPLE IN FAVOUR OF PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL, BUT THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCH A DECISION IS LIKELY TO BE DELAYED UNTIL AFTER BEGIN'S VISIT HERE. THE ISRAELIS HAVE NOT CONSULTED THE AMERICANS IN DETAIL ABOUT PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL AND, SO FAR AS THE STATE DEPARTMENT KNOW, HAVE NOT DISCUSSED THE SUBJECT WITH THE LEBANESE. PENDLETON DREW SOME COMFORT FROM THE POSTPONEMENT OF DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE BY THE ISRAELI CABINET: HE SUGGESTED THAT THE DECLINE IN IDF CASUALTIES OVER THE LAST FORTNIGHT MIGHT TEMPORARILY HAVE TAKEN SOME OF THE HEAT OUT OF THE ISSUE.

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4. FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, PENDLETON SAW LITTLE CHANCE OF A  
BREAKTHROUGH AS A RESULT OF SHULTZ'S CURRENT VISIT TO THE MIDDLE  
EAST. BUT SHULTZ THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT TO ENGAGE THE SYRIANS DIRECTLY  
AND TO TALK FURTHER TO GEMAYEL AND BEGIN BEFORE THEIR VISITS TO  
WASHINGTON LATER THIS MONTH.

WRIGHT

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MR EGERTON  
MR THOMAS  
MR HAYES  
CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION  
ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE

THIS TELEGRAM  
WAS NOT  
ADVANCED

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