

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MR 01-100 # 39, of 124 10/1/01

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

By dal NARA, Date 10/24/01

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, March 24, 1976
9:45 - 10:45 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

SUBJECT: Lebanon



President: Of highest importance is Lebanon. Henry?

Kissinger: Let me bring you up to date. We sent a message to the Syrians last night asking a series of questions about their possible military action. This was designed to waste time. We also sent cables to Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia--but not saying the information came from Syria. We asked the Syrians what they thought of a UN force or an inter-Arab force, and we said we would help with any political solution.

We told Callaghan to raise it with Gromyko who is in London. We didn't want to do it directly because Syria maybe had not gone to them, and it was not the first time they (Syria) came to us. Callaghan reported back to me that Gromyko hadn't heard anything but said he would check. If it makes them mad and they restrain Syria, that helps.

We have a really bizarre situation in Lebanon. Syria is supporting the conservatives and Christians against the PLO and the Communists. Egypt is supporting the leftists and the PLO against Syria. The

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Soviet Union should be supporting Syria, but it also supports the PLO, Israel is, of course, against the PLO. We cannot allow Israel to go into South Lebanon. If we don't restrain them, there will be a UN Security Council meeting where we will either have to condemn them or veto -- and either one is bad.

President: What about the fighting? They are massacring each other.

Kissinger: Unfortunately, I am afraid that is going to continue.

Kissinger/Rumsfeld/Scowcroft: [Discussion of the numbers of Syrian and Egyptian PLA troops in Lebanon.]

President: What would the Syrians do about Israel going in?

Kissinger: They would have to oppose Israel taking over any more "holy" Arab land. Even though it might start as an inter-Arab fight, they would all turn on the Israelis.

Rumsfeld: [Describes numbers of potential evacuees and our resources.]

President: What is next? Do we wait to hear from Syria?

Kissinger: Let's look at our objectives. If Syria could go in quickly and clean it out, it would be good. They would leave the PLO in the same condition as in Jordan.

Rumsfeld: That is not reasonable.

Kissinger: The best attainable outcome would be to have no one in. We may not be able to keep them out anyway. Syria's prestige is involved and Egypt would like to humiliate them.

Rumsfeld: Don't the Israelis have a domestic problem if they don't go in?

Kissinger: That is true. We would have to put massive pressure on Israel and say wait three weeks to see whether the Syrians leave against.

[More discussion]



The best would be if they don't go in, but that will be a put down by us and we will pay for it down the pike. My guess is the approach to us is a trial balloon and they would have gone in if we had given them a green light. I think now they may not.

President: What will happen if no one goes in?

Scowcroft: If no one does, the PLO will take over.

[Considerable discussion of our overall policy in the Lebanon situation.]

P/K/R

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the Lebanese + Christians against ^{the Christians} PLO.
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also supports PLO. It is, of course against PLO.
We cannot allow I to go into S. Lebanon. If
we don't there will be a UNSC vote where
we could either have to withdraw them or
intervention are bad.

P What about fighting. They massacring each
other.

K Unfortunately I fear that is going to continue.

K/R/S (Discussion of # of Syrian + E PLO troops
in Leb.)

P What would Syrians do about I going in?

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BY ld NLF, DATE 4/19/04



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(more discussion)
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(Considerable discussion of our
overall policy in c lib situation)