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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2338
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AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY
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WHITE HOUSE PRIORITY

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE IM/IPS/GR/IR Date: 11/3/97
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FOIA Exemptions _____ TS authority to
PA Exemptions _____ CLASSIFY as S or C Sec. _____
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FROM HABIB

E.O. 120-65: RDS 1,3,4 6/10/01 (HABIB, PHILIP)
TAGS: PEPR, MILI, PINT, MOPS, LE, IS, SY, SA, XF
SUBJECT: HABIB MISSION: CALL ON PRIME MINISTER AL-WAZZAN,
JUNE 10.

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1. **[REDACTED]** ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF MY MISSION, THE PRIME MINISTER'S OPINIONS SUGGEST WE ARE FACING NEW COMPLICATIONS AND DELAYS. HE WAS RELATIVELY MORE PESSIMISTIC AND NEGATIVE, COMPARED WITH OUR PAST MEETINGS, CONCERNING THE SOLUTIONS WE HAD DISCUSSED FOR THE INTER-RELATED ISSUES OF THE SANNIIN, ZAHLE, AND THE SAMS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ZAHLE. HE CONTINUES TO PLACE THE BLAME MOSTLY ON THE PHALANGISTS FOR LEBANON'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS, AND HAS ONLY MODEST HOPES THAT PROCESS OF LEBANESE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

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STARTED AT BAYT AD-DIN WILL SECCEED. HE POLITELY BUT FIRMLY SAID THE ISRAELI ATTACK ON IRAQ HAS BROUGHT SHAME ON THE ENTIRE ARAB NATION WHICH WILL NOW BEGIN THE EFFORT OF WIPING OUT THAT SHAME, TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE US (TO WHICH HE ASSIGNS A SHARE OF THE BLAME FOR THE OPERATION) AND THE BENEFIT OF THE USSR. HE SAYS THE SYRIAN ARMY WILL NOT LEAVE THE SANNIIN RIDGELINE AND HE DECLINED COMMENT ON THE QUESTION OF THE SYRIAN MISSILES IN THE BEKAA VALLEY WHICH I SAID CONTINUED TO CONSTITUTE A GRAVE DANGER. HE

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ASKED ME TO DO WHAT I COULD TO MAKE THE PHALANGISTS MORE REASONABLE. END SUMMARY.

3. I SPENT ONE HOUR WITH PRIME MINISTER SHAFIQ AL-WAZZAN ON JUNE 10, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR DEAN, DAS DRAPER AND DCM BARRETT. WAZZAN'S CHIEF AIDE WAS PRESENT. WAZZAN WAS THOUGHTFUL, POLITE, BUT CRITICAL OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. THE ISRAELI RAID ON IRAQ OVERHUNG THE ENTIRE CONVERSATION.

4. WAZZAN EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR THE LEBANESE FRONT (PHALANGE) TO COOPERATE WITH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND ABANDON THE PATH OF FORCE. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE ARAB LEAGUE AND THE QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE IN THE LEBANESE QUESTION, SAYING IT WAS BETTER THAT THESE OUTSIDE COUNTRIES ACT TOGETHER, RATHER THAN INDIVIDUALLY PULL STRINGS WITH THEIR SUPPORTERS IN LEBANON. HE THOUGHT THIS INVOLVEMENT COULD HELP, AND HE ACKNOWLEDGED MY ROLE IN HAVING BROUGHT IT ABOUT, BUT HE EMPHASIZED THAT IT WAS UP TO THE LEBANESE THEMSELVES TO WORK OUT THEIR DIFFERENCES. HE THOUGHT THIS WAS MORE UNDERSTOOD NOW THAT THE QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE HAD PRODUCED SUCH MEAGER RESULTS, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. THE LEBANESE HAD EXPECTED MUCH BUT NOW SAW MORE

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THAN EVER THAT THE PROBLEM WAS MAINLY THEIRS TO SOLVE. THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, SINCE IT REPRESENTED ALL LEBANESE, HAD THE MAIN ROLE. THE PROCESS STARTED BY THE BATY AD-DIN MEETING WAS THE ONLY RECOURSE LEBANON HAD AND HE HOPED IT COULD BE PURSUED TO A GOOD END.

5. AS USUAL, AL-WAZZAN DEFENDED THE SYRIAN ARMY AND THE UNWILLINGNESS OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO INTERFERE IN ITS OPERATIONS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS WAS NOMINALLY THE COMMANDER OF THE ADF BUT SAID SINCE THE SYRIANS HAD COME IN AT THE REQUEST OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO HELP IT, THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT INTERFERE WITH ITS TACTICAL DECISIONS. HE ALSO CITED AN EXAMPLE OF THE UNPROVOKED ASSUALTS PERPETRATED ON INDIVIDUAL SYRIAN SOLDIERS, WHICH EXPLAINED SOMEWHAT THE SYRIAN WILLINGNESS TO RETALIATE SO STRONGLY.

6. WHEN I STARTED TO POSE SPECIFIC QUESTION RELATING TO MY MISSION, AL-WAZZAN IMMEDIATELY WENT ON TO SAY HOW BADLY THE ISRAELI RAID ON THE IRAQI NUCLEAR FACILITIES HAD HURT US AND OUR POSITION IN THE REGION. HE SPOKE AT LENGTH OF THE SHAME THIS HAD CAUSED TO ALL ARABS, THEY THEY, A RICH AND NUMEROUS PEOPLE, SHOULD SUFFER SUCH A HUMILIATION. HE SAID EFFORTS WOULD BE MADE TO WIPE OUT THIS SHAME AND THIS BODED ILL FOR THE

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US, AND WELL FOR THE USSR, WHICH COULD JUST SIT IDLY BY AND REAP THE BENEFITS OF THE ACTIONS OF THE USG'S SPOILED CHILD, WHICH FEARS NEITHER PUNISHMENT NOR EVEN SCOLDING FROM ITS INDULGENT FATHER.

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7. MY STRONG REMINDER THAT THE US HAD CONDEMNED THE RAID AND HAD NOT KNOWN OF THE RAID IN ADVANCE, MADE LITTLE OR NO IMPRESSION ON HIM, ALTHOUGH HE WAS POLITE. HE SAID NO ONE BELIEVED THAT THE US COULD NOT HAVE KNOWN OF THE RAID, IN VIEW OF THE AMERICAN CAPABILITIES, SPECIFICALLY THE AWACS.

8. I DESCRIBED TO AL-WAZZAN THE EVER-SERIOUS NEED TO DEAL WITH THE ISSUES INVOLVED ON MY MISSION. HE SAID THAT THE PRESENTLY PROPOSED PLAN, FOR PHALANGE WITHDRAWAL FROM ZAHLE AND INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE ENTRY INTO THE CITY, WAS THE ONLY PRACTICAL ONE. HE HOPED THE SYRIAN BLOCKADE WOULD BE LIFTED. HE SAID THERE WAS NO REASON FOR AND NO POSSIBILITY OF A SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SANNIIN RIDGELINE. (IN THIS RESPECT HE WAS MORE NEGATIVE THAN SARKIS.) HE DID NOT RESPOND AT ALL TO

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MY MENTION OF THE MISSILES, IMPLYING THAT, AFTER THE ISRAELI RAID, THE SYRIANS WOULD NOT, AND NO ONE WOULD

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MAKE THEM, TAKE ANY ACTION WHICH SEEMED AT THE BEHEST OF ISRAEL AND THE US. HE SMILINGLY EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT I MIGHT STAY AROUND THE REGION FOR A WEEK OR TWO TO PREVENT THAT PARTICULAR PROBLEM, THE MISSILES, FROM ESCALATING, WHICH I HAD PRESENTED TO HIM AS A REAL THREAT.

9. WHEN I ASKED AL-WAZZAN IF HE HAD ANY ADVICE FOR ME, HE SAID HE HAD JUST ONE REQUEST. THAT IN MY CONTACTS WITH THE LEBANESE FRONT I SHOULD URGE THEM TO CHOOSE THE WAY OF DETENT AND PEACEFUL DISCUSSION OVER THE USE OF FORCE. THE FACTIONS ON THE OTHER (MUSLIM) SIDE WERE NOT BEARING ARMS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT, OR OPERATING INDEPENDENT LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS. THE LEBANESE FRONT SHOULD SEE THAT IT IS IN THEIR INTEREST TO WORK WITH OTHER LEBANESE SO THE LEBANESE COULD FACE, ON A BASIS OF UNITY, SUCH PROBLEMS AS THAT OF THE PALESINIANS. THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT HAVE FOR FORCE TO OBLIGE THE LEBANESE FRON TO CHOOSE THE PEACEFUL PATH. HE HOPED THA WE COULD PERSUADE IT IN THAT DIRECTION.

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