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 By *J*
 NARA Date *4/10/88*

Summary of Conversation

DATE: April 19, 1974

SUBJECT:

Meeting with Lebanese Foreign Minister Fouad NAFFA

1974-4-19, Franjie, Kissinger, Meeting

PARTICIPANTS:

Fouad Naffa' - Foreign Minister, Lebanon
 Najati Kabbani - Lebanese Ambassador to U. S.

The Secretary

Joseph J. Sisco - Under Secretary for Political Affairs *h of*

William B. Buffum - Assistant Secretary, IO

Alfred L. Atherton, Jr. - Assistant Secretary-designate, NEA *h of*

Alec Toumayan - French Interpreter (Notetaker)

COPIES TO:

The Secretary: It's a great pleasure to see you. I do not conduct foreign policy. I am the Middle East Desk Officer and I occasionally see a Latin American. I like the Arabs. In this faceless world one thing you have to say is that the Arabs have personality.

Foreign Minister: The Arabs like you and they trust you and Lebanon trusts you even more.

I would like to talk about the new situation which has shed a different light in Lebanon. The policy of retaliation is now a fact and I will talk about that rather than about the presence of the Palestinians and the fedayeen about which we do what we can and we cannot do much. Back in May, Lebanon had tried to act against the fedayeen but found itself isolated from the Arab World. Emotional reactions developed with respect to the Palestinians. We understand this. They are outside their own borders; they are in Lebanon in significant numbers and they are exploited by all different currents of opinion. I wish to stress first of all that Lebanon does not want to create difficulties and is powerless even

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though it does all it can, as Ambassador Buffum will testify.

The Secretary: Yes, he has already told me and based on my own visit and my understanding of Lebanese attitudes I know that this is true.

Foreign Minister: The fedayeen do not infiltrate in our presence. We try to stem this but it is not always possible and we contain these acts of infiltration. Not even Israel can protect its own borders even though they installed electric wire and in addition this time one cannot say with more certainty than in the past that these fedayeen came into Israel from Lebanon. This time the UN observers saw absolutely nothing and there is less reason to believe that they came from Lebanon than ever before.

The Secretary: Did they come in from Syria?

Foreign Minister: They could have been inside Israel. The Israeli Chief of Police Hillel said that there are some 250 fedayeen inside Israel who should not be confused with the other Arabs living in Israel.

The Secretary: This I did not know.

Foreign Minister: Hillel said it himself. The Israeli Army say they did not see them coming in and the UN observers saw nothing. On the 11th of April the day of Israeli complaint the Chief of Police said they had not come from Lebanon. On the 12th of April after the funeral when the Israeli Minister was almost lynched by the crowd, then he said they had come from Lebanon and that Lebanon should be punished. The retaliation is less justified this time than it has ever been in the past. On the subject of retaliation in general with respect to Lebanon and the U.S., what does Israel get out of its retaliation? Does it stem the flow of fedayeen actions? Retaliation against Lebanon will not stop the fedayeen but whether the Israelis want to or not they run the risk of destroying the Lebanese political concepts.

The Secretary: Let me give you my general assessments. Before I became involved with the Middle East, I thought Israel had a very complicated, long-range foreign policy. Israel does not have a foreign policy; it has a domestic policy. The fact that it upsets the Lebanese internal situation shows that it does not have a long-range view and does not have an understanding of the situation in Lebanon. Israel finds itself under attack; it is under

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attack by its own right wing; it has a government with 10 potential Prime Ministers and it did the easy thing, which was to attack Lebanon. They will worry about the impact upon foreign policy next week. This situation underlines the major difficulty we face with Israel. If Israel had a strong leader like Ben Gurion or someone like Sadat or even Asad things would be much easier for us. Right now we are dealing with 8 or 10 people each busily disappointing one another and each has political influence in the U.S. So we have to walk on ice. Here is our assessment Mr. Foreign Minister:

- (1) We oppose strongly the policy of reprisals.
- (2) We emphasize the importance we attach to our relations with Lebanon and to the policies pursued by Lebanon.
- (3) If progress is made, we feel that it will ease everybody's position and that after a Syrian disengagement then the Palestinian question will come up for discussion. This will ease the actions of the Palestinians because we recognize that you cannot stop them. If Israel cannot stop them from coming in, how can you stop them from going out. It is on this last point that we feel we can do the most. We hope for a Syrian disengagement within the next four to six weeks. As you know I will come again to the Middle East in about ten days and I will try to make significant progress. We are faced with a massive problem in Israel where no government can make a decision; the government which made a decision on the Egyptian disengagement is on its way out. We are exerting strong pressure, even though it is not favorable, and it is essential for us that we have no domestic dispute in the U.S. about the Security Council one week before I go to Israel and ask them in effect to return to the line of October 6. As you see, I am being very frank with you and I hope I never read this in the Beirut newspaper.

Foreign Minister: I have the reputation of being a silent Foreign Minister.

The Secretary: Yes, I know and I also know that I sometimes read in the papers what I have told the Syrians but that has never happened with you.

Next week, just before I leave, at 5:00 P.M. on Thursday, I will have a meeting with the leaders of the

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U.S. Jews and I will ask them to send an emissary to Jerusalem. If I get into a dispute with them about Lebanon then they will not listen to me on Syria. From our viewpoint, this situation has arisen at the worst possible time and this is true from your viewpoint also. We feel that after a Syrian disengagement things will change. Just as we had felt that things would change after an Egyptian disengagement and this has occurred to the extent that the Israelis can now be talking to the Egyptians about peace. We feel that the same change in attitude can occur with the Syrians.

We hope that Lebanon can agree to a moderate resolution as drafted by the Europeans.

Foreign Minister: About resolutions, let me give you a general view about retaliation and its impact. You are saying that after the disengagement occurs, the Palestinian problem will be moving towards its solution. But in the meantime there will be an interval where other fedayeen acts may occur and other reprisals may take place. With Israel things were different in the past in that they struck at the fedayeen, now they strike at Lebanese civilian centers. Dayan has said he wants to turn South Lebanon into a desert and disorganize civilian Lebanese institutions.

The Secretary: Yes, I have read this but Dayan said it for his own political party.

Foreign Minister: That may be so but it was heard in Lebanon also. Lebanon places its entire confidence for its defense in the U.S. It counts on no other. In Lebanon there are some parties who oppose this attitude and I may well be asked what use is this policy of ours of relying upon the United States if we get retaliation every time and there may be a strong pressure to push Lebanon into a united front with Syria and Iraq, and as you know, the Soviet Union is now trying very hard to get Syria and there will be efforts to get Libya into such a front also.

Foreign Minister: If Israel seeks to disorganize the civilian institutions of Lebanon and succeeds, this may lead to a different political regime in Lebanon, and I don't know how much longer we can put up with the present situation.

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The Secretary: I will speak with the Israelis very seriously about this in about ten days. It will be one of my top subjects. I will tell them that they cannot make threats about the Lebanese regime.

Foreign Minister: There are two points here: the territorial integrity of Lebanon and its political regime. If the political regime changes in Lebanon much will change in the Middle East. I know you are aware of the intellectual impact of Lebanon. When Israel disrupts life in Lebanon this is harmful to Lebanon and to the United States also. This is not blackmail on my part, but the United States must try to stop this new policy on the part of Israel. I will be told in my own government that we must make new decisions if all the United States does for us is keep Lebanon from securing a favorable resolution in the Security Council. It is true that a Security Council resolution has only moral and psychological value, but what matters to Lebanon is that it will crystalize the attitude of the United States. I called for the Security Council because I had no other choice and we cannot have a situation where we are regressing and are obtaining less from the Security Council resolution this time than we have in the past because the basic data of the problem are the same as in the past, but we are now in a much better position and yet the Europeans are drafting a resolution which has the practical effect of condemning Lebanon.

The Secretary: No. The reason I say this is that Israel has also complained vigorously against the resolution.

Ambassador Buffum: If the resolution is adopted, you can say it can have it say what you wish it to say. The resolution states very clearly that there shall be no threat. *means it's for war*

Foreign Minister: We cannot accept this resolution.

Ambassador Buffum: All your friends are supporting it, the French for instance.

Foreign Minister: Are the French our friends, in this period of transition for them? I tried to work out in my mind how the French could support this, and I feel only great disappointment.

Mr. Atherton: The resolution directs itself exclusively at Israel and not at Lebanon.

Mr. Sisco: We come under strong criticism from Israel which says that this resolution is characteristically

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unbalanced in favor of the Arabs. If this resolution is passed you can claim it as a major victory for Lebanon.

Ambassador Buffum: I know that Israel will condemn it.

Foreign Minister: In terms of the general situation with Lebanon better placed than before in the past, how can you accept a resolution that is weaker than previous resolutions passed when Lebanon's position was not as strong?

Mr. Sisco: If the resolution is adopted you could represent it as giving considerable support for Lebanon. It deals with the question of counter-raids and with the threats of Dayan. The United States could make a statement in the strongest terms in support of the territorial integrity of Lebanon.

The Secretary: In the strongest terms.

Mr. Sisco: But Israel will certainly attack such a resolution.

The Secretary: The Israeli Ambassador has asked to see me about this text.

Mr. Sisco: Israel will consider it as unbalanced, and I hope the Foreign Minister sees the difficulty which arises if we have to refrain from voting or if we have to oppose it.

The Secretary: If we have to oppose or refrain from voting this is no help to you. If we do not oppose it I might as well not go to Israel, and if we oppose it I will have trouble with the Arab world. What we need at this point is some contact with the Palestinians in order to get them to curtail their activities and tell Dayan that he cannot make war against Lebanon.

Foreign Minister: This quiets my fear. But can the United States take a stand on Lebanon in the Security Council?

The Secretary: If you try to force us too much it might well go the other way.

Foreign Minister: You are saying in effect that the United States cannot go much beyond its present situation and Mr. Sisco is saying that I can find ways to justify the resolution. This frightens me. It shows that Mr. Sisco has absolutely no understanding of the situation

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In Lebanon and I am very disappointed by the attitude of the UK and France.

The Secretary: How to justify the resolution in Lebanon is something that must be based on your expertise. We recognize that you are in a very difficult situation and that you are seeking a statement that is as strong as possible for you. But in the long term view it may be possible for you to succeed with less than the total position. We cannot go significantly beyond what we have outlined. This will already be over violent Israeli opposition and if it becomes more unbalanced we will have to disassociate ourselves from it. In the next three to four weeks the United States will show that it is doing enough for the Arab countries and it will become clear that what we do now is based on our desire to do more in the future.

Foreign Minister: I don't want to repeat myself but in this present situation at the Security Council Lebanon is in a better position than it has been in the past and you want Lebanon to accept less than it has obtained in the past.

Ambassador Buffum: We have abstained on the resolutions that have been adopted in the past.

Foreign Minister: Above all I do not want to hamper you. I do not want to create obstacles. For Israel one condemnation does not matter. It has had ten condemnations and one more or less will not make a difference. For Lebanon a decision is a matter of great importance. I am asking you to say that we will get something like what we have been getting in the past with U. S. assent.

The Secretary: I want to have you continue this discussion with Mr. Sisco and Ambassador Buffum to see what modifications we can make in a direction that would be helpful so that we can vote for it. Otherwise we will be in an impossible situation.

Ambassador Buffum: It would perhaps be enough, in ^{view} ~~view~~ of a resolution, if we made a very strong statement in support of Lebanon at the Security Council that could then be summarized at the end by the Chairman.

The Secretary: Yes, we can certainly make such a statement.

Foreign Minister: I want to avoid obtaining less from