MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
The Cabinet

DATE AND TIME: Friday, June 18, 1976
11:00 a.m.

PLACE: The Cabinet Room

President: Ron just announced we are evacuating Americans from
Lebanon. We will leave essential people in the Embassy to keep
operations going. We began announcements on VOA and BBC because
communications in Beirut are so poor. There are about 1400 people
in Lebanon but we have no idea how many will want to leave, because
it is voluntary. Henry, why don't you describe the situation in Lebanon?

Kissinger: First, the situation about the Meloy killing. He was on his
way to meet with the new President Sarkis, to discuss the situation and
possible U.S. evacuation.

[He describes the assassination.]

To the best of our information, the killing was done by a splinter
group of the rejectionist front. To our best knowledge, it was done
without PLO involvement. All the Arabs have condemned the act, unlike
the Sudan killings.

We will evacuate tomorrow. We will not announce the route.
We have been given adequate assurances and most of the route is
through Syrian-held territory. We have made adequate contingency
preparations but it is important not to comment on this.

We don't know how many will leave. Many have no other real
home, but there is no security in Beirut. But none of the responsible
groups has any real interest in killing Americans, because if there was,
it could be done quite easily at any time. But there are, of course,
totally irresponsible elements. But the overall situation in Lebanon is developing in a way that is not unhelpful to our interests. Lebanon is a tragedy. In U.S. equivalents, four million people have been killed.

In March, the Syrians said they were moving in in 48 hours. The Israelis said they would move in that case. If that happened, we would have united all the Arabs against it. If Israel didn't act and if Syria cleaned it up, we would be accused by Egypt of colluding with the Syrians. But if the Syrians didn't move, the radicals could dominate Lebanon and Syria would then be squeezed between a radical Lebanon and Iraq.

We maneuvered our way through this and governmental changes were made. [He describes the election, etc.] But there was no security so the political changes couldn't take place. So Syria decided to act. [Describes Syrian-held territory.]

It looks now like no one will gain an overwhelming victory. What is likely to emerge is an Arab solution with no one in predominance, with the PLO weakened, but with Egypt relatively content and Syria as well. The end result should be a strategic situation which is favorable to us, because Syria and Egypt probably will get back together. We must remember that we are the only ones who are really in touch with all the parties and the only useful force working with all of them. [Compares with the Soviets] It could blow up, of course, but if it goes on track, that is a likely outcome.

A spectacular Syrian defeat probably would overthrow Assad. With this probable moderate outcome, we are in a good position for peace. If we can keep all the radicals from uniting, or all the Arabs, it looks like a positive aspect to the tragedy of Lebanon.

Secretary Richardson: Why did the Syrians support the Christians and what kept them from a spectacular victory?

Kissinger: The Christians were about to be wiped out and that would have given Lebanon to the radicals who would have squeezed the Syrians. A spectacular Syrian victory in March could have given them a need to prove their Arab nature and turn on the Christians; this would have radicalized Jordan and put pressure on the Saudis and isolated Egypt. They didn't win spectacularly, first because it is an agony for them to be attacking the PLO, and second they underestimated the strength they faced.

[The next item was a campaign update.]

[The next item was our line on busing.]
Cabinet Note
18 Jan 26

P. Ron jet commanders are expressing views from Germany. We will have additional people to work on the project. We have an estimate of 1845 people in Poland, but this is very difficult to estimate. They are doing a lot of work, but we don't want to leave it up to the Germans. We don't want to leave it up to the Germans.

K. First, a jet attack on Berlin today, he was on his way to meet with the Polish officers.

(Discussion about air strikes)

Today, our jets are hitting some targets in a small group of 5-10 airplanes. It's a very difficult situation. We will have more tomorrow. We will not continue this tonight. We have taken some appropriate measures, but we need more Soviet airpower. We have taken some appropriate measures, but this is not going to continue.

We don't know how many will come. Many have no other way home, but there is no security in Berlin. But there is still good will and interest in Berlin. One, because of the air, but also because of the people. But there is still good will and interest in Berlin. One, because of the air, but also because of the people.

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have been invaded.

For me, Syria's kind. They were usually in

military. In fact, they would work in

the case. If that happened, we would have a

vital task against it. If I didn't act like

without a fight, we could be successful by

collecting with Syria. But if Syria didn't

move, a situation could develop which

Syria then be squeezed but a tactical beaten

Egypt.

We recommended one way than this is gentle

changes are made (describe electric, etc.), but

there were no serious political changes

would take place. So Syria decided to do it.

(Describe Syria's hold territory)

It will not last long as we will gain more

victory. What likely to emerge is an Arab

situation if two are in partnership, but if we

are together, but if we relatively control

as well. The final result should be a

strategic front, which is formidable, because

Syria to Egypt will put to destruction. We

must remember that we are a very weak

entity in each of our parts and very weak

forces working with all (Empire of 9/9).

It could be worse of course, but if we can

track, that is likely continue.

A spectacular Syria victory could have

just been present on Syria's. A spectacular

Syria defeat could be counterpointed.

By all this great multiplication, we are

in a good position for peace. You can keep
all soldiers from unity as a whole. It looks like a joint effort. The tragic consequence.

Why did they surrender to Christians? What kept them from open victory.

The Christians were not to be wiped out. That would have given them to a veritable army. The emperor realized he could have won with a small force.

He didn't win, but his army was intact. He could win again.

(Next item: Campaign update)

(Next item: Line on history)