SYRIA AND LEBANON

POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES WITH RESPECT TO THE EVACUATION OF FRENCH AND BRITISH TROOPS FROM SYRIA AND LEBANON

SECRET

LONDON, January 2, 1946—2 p. m.

[Received 11:08 p.m.]

13. In reviewing Levant State troop withdrawal question with US, Baxter of FonOff said that evacuation of Syria had presented no particular problems to British and French military representatives and that discussions on this subject initiated on December 21 had been continued on December 28. Evacuation from Lebanon on other hand had given rise to series of difficulties, some of which had been so important as to necessitate reference to Paris and London for reconsideration.

One of these problems concerned composition of force to remain in Lebanon until UNO able to take over. British military representatives, acting under their instructions, had taken position that force would be Anglo-French. French interpreted agreement to mean that there would be a period before assumption of responsibility by UNO when French would be in sole occupation. Owing to loose wording of agreement it was obvious that there had been a real misunderstanding on both sides on this point but actually much more than a question of interpretation was involved because British felt that as a practical matter the leaving of a comparatively small French force alone in Lebanon would be risky business from security viewpoint since trouble might very possibly recur which French could not handle without reinforcements. Such a situation would present

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1 For previous documentation on this subject, see Foreign Relations, 1945, vol. VIII, pp. 1160-1188, passim.

2 The Anglo-French agreement regarding the withdrawal of British and French troops from the Levant, signed at London on December 13, 1945, stated in part: "The programme of evacuation will be drawn up in such a way that it will ensure the maintenance in the Levant of sufficient forces to guarantee security until such time as the United Nations Organisation has decided on the organisation of collective security in this zone." For draft text of agreement, see ibid., p. 1176.
explosive possibilities not only in Lebanon but in Near East generally. However, solution of this problem should not necessarily hold up preceding evacuation steps in Syria and it might be cleared up automatically if UNO action could be speeded. Presumably Levant State governments would not lose opportunity to seek to apply such accelerating pressure.

A second and more immediate problem was manner in which proportional withdrawal of French and British troops would be calculated. British had taken position that withdrawal would be on global basis of total French and British troop strength in both Syria and Lebanon. (Baxter estimated these at about 21,000 British and 8,000 French.) In discussing withdrawal from Syria, where French estimated to have 1,000 or so troops as compared about 10,000 British, French had suggested withdrawing their contingent into Lebanon and complete withdrawal of British elsewhere. Although not sharing French view, British now inclined to feel that their own original instructions may have been somewhat too rigid and they have just suggested to French that all French and British forces in Syria be withdrawn entirely from Levant States as soon as possible, possibly within about 3 months, and that status of troops in Lebanon be left as it is for the moment, while pressing for early action by UNO. If UNO action delayed, further consideration would then have to be given to troop reduction in Lebanon. Baxter saw key to this problem in speed with which UNO prepared to act.

Baxter emphasized all this now very much in talking stage between Fonoff and French Embassy here and that insufficient time yet to ascertain French reaction.

Regarding discussion of these matters with Syrians and Lebanese, Baxter observed that such action was of course envisaged by Anglo-French agreement of December 13 and he assumed such talks might begin following initiation of Franco-British military negotiations. He said he saw no reason why such four-party discussion should interfere with long-term question of assumption of security responsibility by UNO.

Sent to Department as 13; repeated to Beirut as 1; repeated to Paris as 2.

WINANT

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3 In telegram 5, January 2, 1946, 3 p. m., the Chargé in Beirut reported that the Anglo-French military conversations had practically broken down, the British especially being pessimistic unless London and Paris clarified the terms of the Anglo-French agreement (890D.01/1-246). At a further meeting, lasting about 2 hours on January 4, the British and French reached agreement on troop withdrawal from Syria (except for the question of withdrawal from the Mezzé airport). In telegram 9, January 4, 3 p. m., the Chargé noted that the agreement "represented merely paper work as no decision was made as to what place troops would be withdrawn to." (890D.01/1-446)
The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Caffery)

SECRET

WASHINGTON, January 5, 1946—6 p.m.

60. If favorable opportunity presents itself you may wish to inform M. Bidault or some other appropriate Foreign Ministry official that Dept’s views re Anglo-French Levant agreement are those contained in first three paragraphs of Dept’s 5975, Dec. 20, 9 p.m. As stated in Dept’s 6069, Dec. 28, 7 p.m., these views were made clear, at Mr. Bevin’s request, to Brit Govt which has indicated that substance thereof was communicated to French.

Oral communication received from Brit Emb here quotes Mr. Bevin as stating in fact that our views enabled Brit “to represent very forcibly to French Govt objections which would be felt in America to the phrase ‘the leading role’ (contained in first draft agreement shown Dept) and as a result we were able eventually to induce French Govt to agree to revised wording which is not open to similar objection”.


BYRNE

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

LONDON, January 7, 1946—6 p.m.

[Received January 8—1: 16 a.m.]

175. Reference Embtel No. 13 dated Jan. 2. Questioned today regarding status of Levant State troop withdrawal negotiations between British and French, Henderson of Eastern Dept said that both parties were still maintaining their positions and that further complicating factor had arisen in form of disagreement regarding consideration to be given security situation following troop withdrawal. British took position that security consideration should be considered first and plans then made accordingly for withdrawal, whereas France took view that security discussions should follow those on withdrawal. British thought this was “putting the cart before the horse” and suspected that what French had in mind was to complicate negotiations in order to delay withdrawal until UNO takes over in anticipation that UNO will be favorably disposed to offering French maintenance

* Georges Bidault, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.
* This was a repeat of telegram 413 to Beirut, Foreign Relations, 1945, vol. VIII, p. 1184.
* This was a repeat of telegram 420 to Beirut, ibid., p. 1187.
* Ernest Bevin, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
of bases in Lebanon and that such a solution would be welcome to Lebanese. Henderson said he thought French were deluding themselves on both grounds but that they seemed to persist in that attitude. He added that present situation is that British proposals are still before French and next move is up to Paris.\textsuperscript{8}

Sent Dept 175; repeated Beirut as 3; Paris as 16.

\textbf{WINANT}

\textit{501.BB/1-1146: Telegram}

\textit{The Secretary of State to the Acting Secretary of State} \textit{\textsuperscript{9}}

\textbf{SECRET}

\textbf{LONDON, January 11, 1946—4 p. m.}

\textbf{[Received 5:31 p. m.]}  
348. DelUN 44. In conversations with chairman and members of Syrian and Lebanese delegations Wadsworth \textsuperscript{10} is informed that their govt\'s are seriously considering proposing to General Assembly that it give urgent consideration to question of withdrawal of French (and British) troops from Levant territory, especially in light of situation created by Anglo-French agreements of Dec 13.

Highlights of Syro-Lebanese argument were: Anglo-French accord although of highest interest to Levant States was concluded without their being given any prior notification.\textsuperscript{11}

In general, the accord recalls its precursors of 1904 and World War I period by seemingly dividing Near East into British and French zones of influence, a policy clearly contrary to principles of United Nations Charter.

In particular Britain and France by seemingly charging themselves with responsibility for Near Eastern security infringe on sovereignty of Levant States and on recognized functions of UNO.

Not only is no clear provision made for withdrawal of foreign troops but accord seems clearly intended to provide procedure for exactly the contrary, i.e. for maintaining French troops in Lebanon indefinitely.

\textsuperscript{8} In telegram 14, January 8, 9 a. m., the Chargé in Beirut advised that the Anglo-French military conversations had broken down (890E.01/1-846). The deadlock, according to the British Foreign Office, was apparently caused by the French contention that only the British were required to withdraw from Lebanon. (Telegram 491, January 15, 6 a. m., from London, 890D.01/1-1546)

\textsuperscript{9} Secretary Byrnes was in London as Chairman of the United States delegation at the First Session of the First Meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations, which took place in London January 16—February 14, 1946.

\textsuperscript{10} George Wadsworth, Minister to Syria and Lebanon; at this time detailed as a political adviser to the United States delegation at the United Nations meeting in London.

\textsuperscript{11} The Lebanese and Syrian Governments set forth their formal views on the Anglo-French agreement in notes presented to the British Legations at Beirut and at Damascus on January 9. The notes, while welcoming the principle of troop evacuation, raised objections to other aspects of the agreement. (Telegram 25, January 10, from Beirut, and telegram 8, January 11, from Damascus, filed under 890E.01/1-1046 and 890D.01/1-1146, respectively.)
Already situation in Levant shows disturbing signs of building up
to crisis similar to that of last May, with French provocations and
intrigues continuing.

Wadsworth’s informants added that they would welcome any com-
ment Dept or this delegation might be willing to offer as to propriety
of their proposing that General Assembly consider placing questions
on current agenda for discussion and possible reference to Security
Council.

Delegation would welcome Dept’s comment including indication
as to whether it proposes to communicate to British and French Govts
formal expression of its views on Anglo-French agreements in
question.

BYRNE

890D.01/1-1146: Telegram

The Chargé in Lebanon (Mattison) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

BEIRUT, January 11, 1946—6 p. m.
[Received January 12—3:46 p. m.]

27. Today I called on Acting ForMin (PriMin)\textsuperscript{12} at his request.

Chief subject of discussion was AP report, dated January 9, from
New York which in substance stated that spokesman of Department
had characterized as “inexact” information received from Cairo to
effect that Syrian and Lebanese delegates to UNO had received “as-
surances” of US dissatisfaction with Anglo-French Levant agreement.

The New York Times’ Washington correspondent was reported as
stating that Levant Governments had asked Department’s views on
accord, and that Department had replied that it had no comment as it
was not party thereto. Spokesman was quoted as saying “US Gov-
ernment had given no assurances”.

PriMin requested that I ascertain from Department facts of case,
and desired that I make known that his Government was under
criticism for not having taken more energetic steps towards securing
US support in connection with Lebanese position on Anglo-French
Levant agreement.

I pointed out that position of United States Government with regard
to Lebanese independence was well known, and that our recognition
had been unconditional.\textsuperscript{13} PriMin replied that he was aware of this,
and was grateful, but in view of current state of public opinion reports
of nature described created uneasiness, at a time when above all he
wished to maintain calm (i.e. during UNO meeting). While he did

\textsuperscript{12} Sami Solh.

\textsuperscript{13} For documentation on recognition of the independence of Syria and Lebanon
by the United States, see Foreign Relations, 1944, vol. v, pp. 774 ff.
not specifically say that he desired a reply suitable for publication, he gave impression that such would be welcome.

I inquired whether report which I had received yesterday to effect that further French troops were en route to Lebanon was true. He replied in affirmative, adding that French had informed him that these consisted of replacements, and that for some 200 en route 400 would be withdrawn. I commented on fact that French had informed Lebanese in advance, and added that this would seem to represent concession to Lebanese point of view. He replied that this was immaterial. Government saw no need for replacements since evacuation was agreed upon, and that secondly French were replacing the "blind and sick" with trained airforce technicians.

He then inquired regarding my reaction to Lebanese note to French and British (reLegtel 25 of January 10 14). I replied that I found it clear exposition of Lebanese viewpoint, and had telegraphed Washington summary thereof.

As I left, Russian Minister Solod entered, and I presume that he was being questioned on same point.

PriMin was obviously worried, and while this may be partially due to his fear of public criticism of his Government, it was quite apparent that he was concerned with current uneasiness, and was trying to secure every possible support for Lebanon's international position, thereby keeping situation in hand during UNO session.

Repeated to Paris as 12; to London (for Wadsworth) as 13. Sent to Department as 27.

MATTISON

890D.01/1-1146: Telegram

_The Chargé in Syria (Porter) to the Secretary of State_

SECRET

DAMASCUS, January 16, 1946—4 p. m.
[Received January 17—10:44 a.m.]

11. Deptel 413, December 20 to Beirut. 15 PriMin 16 stated to me this morning that though he understood that we did not support Anglo-French agreement on Levant he felt we were being noticeably reticent in commenting on its undesirable features. His uneasiness had increased, he said, when he saw in Secretary Byrnes' speech 17 a statement to effect that we must not expect that each and every prob-

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14 Not printed, but see footnote 11, p. 751.
16 Saadalah Jabri.
lem can be presented to and solved by UNO. Also, the possible application to Syria of that portion of Secretary’s speech dealing with arrangements for security organizations troubled him.

Did first of above statements mean Syria’s problems might not be considered, he inquired. As for the second statement, he hoped British and French would not be permitted to make arrangements between themselves concerning Levant security as everyone knew what would happen then. Any assurances we might be in a position to give on these points would relieve his mind considerably.18

Sent Dept as 11; repeated London for Minister Wadsworth.

PORTER

501.BB/1-1646: Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at London

SECRET

WASHINGTON, January 16, 1946—8 p. m.

503. UNDel 68. Reurtel 348 Jan 11, 4 p. m., DelUN 44. In the absence of circumstances calling for an official expression of this Govt’s position regarding Anglo-Levant Agreements Dept does not contemplate at least for present communicating its views to French and Brit Govts on any more formal basis than has already been done. We have authorized Legations at Beirut and Damascus to inform Lebanese and Syrian Govts that we were not parties to negotiations which led to conclusion of these agreements and that this Govt had not given its approval thereto; we have told Brit informally of our views regarding them; and we have authorized Emb at Paris to bring our views to attention of French Govt on appropriate occasion. (See Dept’s 413 Dec 20 9 pm and 420 Dec 28 7 pm to Beirut,19 and 60 Jan 5, 6 pm to Paris, all repeated to London.)

Benard, First Sec French Emb, called Jan 9 to inquere re press report from Cairo that US would support Syria and Lebanon if they presented their case to UNO. He was told that Dept had not been asked for such assurances and would not give them if requested; that we recently told Iran, in reply to similar request for advance assurance of support before UNO, that we did not consider it in keeping with spirit of UNO to give such assurances in advance in any case to be brought before that body.20 We added that for same reason we frankly objected to provision of Franco-Brit Agreement in which Britain and France gave each other guarantees in advance regarding

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18 In telegram 7, January 25, 1946, the Department instructed the Chargé to reassure the Syrian Prime Minister regarding U.S. policy along the lines outlined in Department’s telegram 18, January 18, 1946, 8 p. m., to Beirut, printed on p. 758.
20 See telegram 4, January 2, to Tehran, p. 292.
sympathetic attitude which each would take vis-à-vis other in case which might be brought before UNO concerning Middle East. Benard was also informed that we did not like provision of Agreement which contains assurances of their "intention of doing nothing to supplant the interests or responsibilities of the other in the Middle East". In reply to these observations Benard remarked that he knew that our policy had been clear in this respect since our 1924 Treaty with France.

Dept has taken the position that each member of UNO should be free to decide for itself whether it should present any complaint which it may have to UNO now or later, although Dept naturally hopes that UNO would not be compelled at this organizational juncture to face a problem of this kind.


ACHESON

890D.01/1-1146: Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in Lebanon (Mattison)

SECRET

WASHINGTON, January 18, 1946—8 p. m.

18. You may inform PriMin that as indicated in last paragraph Dept’s 503 Jan 16 to London (repeated Beirut as Dept’s 95 [15]) our position is that each member of UNO should be free to decide for itself whether it should present to UNO now or later any complaint which it may have. Naturally we hope that UNO will not be compelled at this organizational juncture to face a problem of this kind. We have adhered to position that we should not endeavor directly or indirectly to influence Lebanon’s decision, and we have consequently abstained from “assurances” quoted in press reports, referred to in Legtel 27 Jan 11.

You may reiterate to PriMin Dept’s assurances of this Govt’s firmly continued adherence to its policy regarding the full and unconditional independence of Lebanon.


ACHESON

890E.01/1-2216: Telegram

The Chargé in Lebanon (Mattison) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

BEIRUT, January 22, 1946—6 p. m.

[Received January 22—5:20 p. m.]

42. I today saw Acting ForMin (PriMin) and verbally informed him of substance of Deptel 18 of Jan 18. He seemed to be grateful
therefore, but it was evident that he had hoped for more formal “assurance”. I was careful to point out reasons given by Dept as to why US Govt refrained from such assurances.

He then expressed hope that Lebanese would have support of US should question come to decisive state before UNO. I repeated that assurances in this respect could not be given in advance.

He appeared to understand our reasoning, and was obviously gratified when informed that I had been authorized to reiterate US Govt’s policy of full and unconditional recognition of Lebanese independence.

ReLegtel 15 of Jan. 8. I took occasion to inquire whether PriMin cared to comment on the alleged Russian assurances regarding Lebanese independence and Anglo-French agreement. He said, frankly enough, that no formal assurance had been given, but that he had seen no reason for denying something that was to Lebanon’s advantage.

Actually Russian Minister Solod had talked to him on an informal basis and had taken much the same line as I had in my talk with ForMin (reDeptel 413 of December 20 and Legtel 430 of December 24). However, he continued, Russians were not adverse to employing “trial balloons” and it was possible that Lebanon might yet receive some type of formal assurance.

Sent to Dept as 42; repeated to London for Wadsworth as 15; to Paris as 13 and to Moscow as 2.  

MATTISON

The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State

SECRET  
PARIS, February 4, 1946—6 p. m.
US URGENT  
[Received February 5—6:40 a. m.]

548. My 446, January 23. In addition to my talks with Bidault we have also made occasion to impress on Chauvel, Ostrorog and other ranking Foreign Office officials our views on Franco-British agreement on Levant as set forth in Dept’s 5975, December 20. While I believe that French now understand our position they do not of [Not printed; it cited an unconfirmed report of January 5 by the Reuters correspondent at Cairo that Soviet Minister Solod had informed the Lebanese Government that the Soviet Union maintained its decision to recognize the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon and that it would support the Lebanese Government should that Government oppose the Anglo-French agreement (890E.01—1—846).]

[Not printed; it reported a statement by the French Foreign Minister that he was now free to take a less rigid position regarding the Levant since the resignation of the de Gaulle government but that he was unwilling to acquire the reputation of having presided at the funeral of France in that area (751.00/1—2346). The de Gaulle government resigned on January 20.]

This was a repeat of telegram 413 to Beirut, Foreign Relations, 1945, vol. viii, p. 1184.
course agree entirely with all our views on this subject. Therefore following summary of French position as expressed by officials mentioned above may be useful to Dept as an indication of French thought on this subject.

Foreign Office states that it has realized for some time that France can no longer maintain a special privileged position in Levant and that arrangements for withdrawal of French forces were necessary before a satisfactory settlement of whole Levant problem could be reached. (French are frank to say that they regret very much this withdrawal.) It was for this reason that Franco-British agreement of December 13 which bound two powers to withdrawal of military forces from Levant was signed. French take view that this agreement constitutes a basic and real step forward in solution of Levant problem. French maintain that despite decision to withdraw troops French Govt is nonetheless in "a delicate position vis-à-vis French public opinion and cannot afford to give French public impression that it is gratuitously abandoning all French interests in area". Should it order immediate withdrawal of all troops from Levant particularly when British are still maintaining forces in other Arab states and have not even reached agreement in principle to withdraw them French Govt “would risk a serious reaction from French public particularly in view of traditional French suspicions of British motives in Middle East and probable interpretation of this action by French people as a voluntary abandonment of all French interests in Middle East.” (In connection with foregoing French officials are perhaps even more suspicious of British motives and of desire of British Colonial Office to replace France in Levant and Mideast).

French observe that December 13 agreement providing for withdrawal of troops from Syria into Lebanon and subsequent withdrawal from Lebanon when UNO has organized collective security in that area will be infinitely more acceptable to French people since UNO aspect raises question from national to international level and French public opinion will probably not react unfavorably.

With foregoing factors in mind French state that they do not see necessity for immediate evacuation of French and British troops from Levant until collective security has been organized in that area thru UNO. They believe that a premature withdrawal would jeopardize Christian population and they argue that since foreign troops are stationed in many countries in world they fail to see why, when French and British have agreed to withdrawal troops, Syrians and Lebanese should complicate matters by pressing for immediate withdrawal.

Foreign Office admits that France in past has made serious errors in Levant but feels that these past errors are no reason for present
French Govt to abandon legitimate French interests in area or to have France placed in a less favored position in this area than other foreign nations such as US and England. In this connection French feel very strongly about closing of French schools by Syrians and they believe that until Syrians permit French schools to operate in Syria on same basis and under same conditions as other foreign schools there is no reason for French troops to be withdrawn. They point out that such action would be impossible to explain to French public which has long taken pride in “the predominance of French culture in the Levant”. For foregoing reasons French believe that Syrians should be made to understand that while French realize they cannot maintain a special position in Levant no French Govt can permit Syria and Lebanon to place France in a position of inferiority vis-à-vis other foreign countries which have interests in area.

While it is obvious that there are some Frenchmen who would like to perpetuate France’s former position of special privilege in Levant, foregoing represents a brief summary of French views as expressed by Foreign Office and it may be helpful in understanding present French approach to this problem.


Caffery

501.BC/2-746: Telegram

The United States Representative at the United Nations (Stiellinius) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

LONDON, February 7, 1946—10 a. m.

US URGENT

[Received February 7—8:59 a. m.]

1492. DelUN 248. Supplementing DelUN 233, February 5.

Following is summary of conversation between Hamid Bey Frangié,

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25 In despatch 389, January 11, 1946, from Damascus, the Chargé, in reporting that the French schools in Syria had not reopened at the beginning of the new school year, stated: “The position taken by the Syrian Ministry of Education here is that during the course of the year 1944, all foreign schools were requested to supply certain statistical information to the Ministry, and all complied, with the exception of French schools. To a second request for this information sent to these schools, a curt reply came from the French Delegation at Damascus stating that the French institutions to which these inquiries had been addressed were under the protection of the Delegation to which in future all such inquiries should be sent. As a result, the Syrian authorities have adopted the point of view that these French schools were more political than educational in nature, and that since the bombardment of May last terminated the direct political relations of the Syrian and French Governments any French schools desiring to open their doors anew must comply with the regulations prescribed by the Syrian Government.” (590D.42/1-1746).

26 Not printed; it reported that the Chief Delegates of Syria and Lebanon at the United Nations (Faris el-Khoury and Hamid Frangié) had filed with the Secretary General a joint communication requesting that the Security Council adopt a decision recommending total and simultaneous evacuation of foreign troops from Syrian and Lebanese territories (501.BB/2-546). For text of the letter, see United Nations, Official Records of the Security Council, First Year, First Series, Supplement No. 1, p. 82.
Lebanese Foreign Minister, and Mr. George Wadsworth on February 4 regarding decision of Lebanese and Syrian delegations to submit Levant “dispute” to Security Council.

Hamid Bey recalled that early in December the two Governments had learned that Anglo-French agreement to withdraw British and French troops from Levant had been reached in principle. Agreement was signed in London on December 13 and text sent to two Levant Governments. Neither had been consulted and agreement was fundamentally unacceptable on many counts, notably as a seeming return to sphere-of-influence policy in Near East and in making final withdrawal of troops conditional upon adoption by SC (Security Council) of regional security measures.

Hamid Bey added that shortly after General Beynet returned from Paris to Beirut about December 20 he had informed President Khouri that Anglo-French agreement envisaged more extensive discussions with Levant Governments for general settlement of outstanding questions than was indicated by narrow reading of text.

Shortly after Lebanese delegation arrived London for GA (General Assembly) informal word was received from Ostrorog, Beynet’s chief assistant, suggesting desirability of establishing direct contact with French GA delegation. Such contact not then made. It was gathered in conversations with FO officials, especially Cadogan, and cables from Beirut that British-French military conversations in Beirut in December were without result. Syrian and Lebanese delegations concluded French only playing for time. Therefore, heads of the two delegations had stated their case in GA debate on PreCo, (Preparatory Commission) report on January 19.

It was suggested about January 30 to Lebanese Delegate Joseph Salem by French Deputy Gorse who came especially from Paris that contact between French and Lebanese delegations would be profitable. Only result was brief corridor conversation between Hamid Bey and Bidault which was unsatisfactory to former since no indication was given that new French Government would fix even tentative date for withdrawal of troops.

Hamid Bey, therefore, suggested through Gorse that Ostrorog (then in Paris) come to London which he did on February 2. Their conversations that evening were unsatisfactory. Ostrorog urged delay in presenting Syrian-Lebanese petition to SC on ground confidence could be placed in new French Government’s intention but was unable to offer assurances on early action and only suggested

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27 Paul-Etienne Beynet, French Delegate General in Syria and Lebanon.
28 Sir Alexander Cadogan, British Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and British Representative at the United Nations.
that specific date for departure of French troops should be subject of Anglo-French-Syrian-Lebanese conversations taking place after GA meeting either in London or Paris or, if neutral ground desired, in Switzerland. At second meeting, February 2, same ground covered. Hamid Bey was firm no agreement to enter formal negotiations possible unless French prepared first to give written unconditional assurances that French troops would be actually withdrawn by specified early date. Ostrorog replied such date must be contingent upon such time as UNO had decided upon organization of collective security in this zone. This the language of December 13 Anglo-French agreement.

Between above two conversations Hamid Bey saw Cadogan but unable obtain assurances that FO prepared to press French to meet Levant views. Cadogan commented that Levant States were being “disobliging” in basing their complaint in part on December 13 Anglo-French accord.

At conferences night of February 3 and morning February 4 between members of Syrian and Lebanese delegations it was decided to present case by joint communication to SC. Such action appeared to them to be their only hope and was in accordance with their Governments’ instructions. Hamid Bey stated that not to do so would have left their Governments in extremely awkward position vis-à-vis their parliaments and peoples.\(^\text{39}\)

Hamid Bey said that he realized he could not expect advance assurances that US would support Syrian-Lebanese case but felt he was not unjustified in believing that in fact such would be the case in view of consistent sympathetic support given Levant States in their efforts to obtain and consolidate full independence.

Wadsworth lunched February 4 with Syrian Minister. Bevin was guest of honor. To mention that Levant States had apparently decided to submit their case to SC, Bevin commented along following lines: He seemed to feel mistake was being made and if he were given 2 or 3 days could in view of change of French Government, find satisfactory basis for quadrilateral negotiations. He said he would be glad to send telegram “today” ordering British troops out of Levant. Generally indicated that he thought French were being treated pretty badly all around in matter. He mentioned France’s historic position dating back to the Crusades. Wadsworth ventured to reply that in view of many historians this was a distorted claim, notably because both strictly French Crusades had been signally defeated by Moslems and because Vatican-recognized right of France

\(^{39}\) The French view of these developments was brought to the attention of Charles E. Bohlen, Adviser to the United States delegation at the London session of the United Nations, on February 6 by Count Ostrorog (10 files, USSC 46/13 Conv 7).
to protect Christians in East never recognized by Ottomans and never exercised except with respect to foreign pilgrims who had no Consul of their own nationality. Bevin’s reply was non-committal with implication that American position would be more realistic were United States prepared to share practical responsibilities in area.

STETTINIUS

501.BB/2-846: Telegram

The United States Representative at the United Nations (Stettinius) to the Secretary of State

SECRET                        LONDON, February 8, 1946—8 a. m.
URGENT                        [Received 11:37 a. m.]

1553. This is DelUN 245. DelUN 233, February 5,31 and 248, February 6,32 Following is submitted regarding the dispute brought by Syria and Lebanon which may come before Security Council meeting February 9 or 11.

In conversation with me Bidault and Massigli33 yesterday evening (DelUN 253, February 7 34) indicated apparent willingness that Syrian and Lebanese presentations of the case should be heard promptly by Security Council and that the French should then and probably without making answer to such presentations express willingness to engage in quadrilateral negotiations, case to remain on agenda with parties undertaking to keep Security Council informed of progress of negotiations.

In another conversation at same hour, Faris [el-]Khoury gave Wadsworth informally to understand that Syrians and Lebanese would probably be prepared to state their case very simply, without recriminations based on past incidents, and would not oppose direct negotiations with British and French on condition that, as regards withdrawal of troops, negotiations proceed on principle of pari passu withdrawal from Lebanon and Syria in such way as to be completed simultaneously by British and French troops and at earliest date consistent with technical considerations.

Khoury indicated that by phrase “to state case very simply” he had in mind setting forth that troops were those of Allied powers whose arrival in 1941 and presence during war years had been welcomed and facilitated by Syrians and Lebanese in prosecution of common cause against Axis; that, with victory of Allied armies, continuing presence of any of such troops was no longer necessary and in

31 Not printed, but see footnote 26, p. 761.
32 Supra.
33 René Massigli, French Ambassador in the United Kingdom and member of the French delegation at the United Nations.
34 Not printed.
fact constituted infringement on sovereignty of fully independent Levant States; and consequently that Syria and Lebanon, fully cognizant of their responsibilities for maintenance of security within their territories and fully competent to meet such responsibilities, had formally requested “total and simultaneous withdrawal”.

Khouri indicated in conclusion that by phrase “earliest date consistent with technical considerations” he had in mind (but would not necessarily elaborate the point publicly unless constrained thereto by French rebuttal) that removal should not be conditioned on political expediency or possible future UN consideration of collective regional security but on the contrary would be begun immediately and completed with all reasonable technical expedition (e.g. within a maximum of next 6 months) by both powers.

I consider it preferable to avoid a full-dress debate of this dispute during the current London sittings of SC. I have in mind, unless Department is of different view, informally working to that end along the lines of the outcome in the Iranian case. It seems possible that we might be successful in obtaining advance agreement among delegations principally concerned that Syria and Lebanon’s case be heard, that France and the UK indicate readiness to negotiate, that Syria and Lebanon do the same; and that SC then adopt a resolution taking cognizance of the statements, noting readiness of parties to negotiate without delay, and requesting the parties to keep SC informed on progress of negotiations and results achieved, the matter meantime to remain on the agenda.

The Secretary General’s suggestion this morning that SC’s remaining sittings here be today, possibly Saturday, February 9 then daily as required beginning Monday, February 11 through Friday, February 15 makes likely the raising of this question February 11 or possibly 9, if the Indonesian discussion is not extended.

STETTINIUS

501.BB/2-846: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the United States Representative at the United Nations (Stettinius)

SECRET

WASHINGTON, February 9, 1946—2 p. m.

US URGENT

1385. UNdel 191. Reurtel 1553, Feb 8, DelUN 245. The general policy of this Govt is to support the rapid withdrawal of foreign

* In that case the Security Council reached unanimous agreement on a resolution which took cognizance of the readiness of the Soviet Union and Iran to seek a solution of their dispute by bilateral negotiation, requested the parties to report the results, and retained the right of the Council to request information at any time as to the progress of the negotiations; see telegram 1166, January 30, from London, p. 325.
troops from the territory of any member of the United Nations occupied during the war if the local govt presses for their departure. It was in accordance with this policy that we addressed a note to the Soviet and British Govts in Nov 1945 suggesting the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from Iran, in view of the expressed desires of the Iranian Govt. Syria and Lebanon merit no less support than Iran in this respect. Moreover we would not wish to take a strong stand where Soviet forces are primarily involved and to remain silent in a case where Soviet forces are not concerned. You should therefore make clear at an appropriate occasion during the public discussion the sympathy of the American Govt for the Syrian and Lebanese request.

With regard to your suggestion that it would be desirable to avoid a full-dress debate of this dispute during the current session of SC, we do not wish to take any action which would deprive Syrian and Lebanese Govts of a full opportunity to present their case or would prevent any other govt from expressing its views with regard to the matter. We perceive no objection to an arrangement along the lines suggested in the penultimate paragraph of your telegram under reference provided it can be effected without pressure being brought on any of the interested parties.

Byrnes

501LB/2-1496 : Telegram

The United States Representative at the United Nations (Stettinius) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

US URGENT

LONDON, February 14, 1946—1 a. m.

[Received 12:24 p. m.]

1839. This is DelUN 324. I appreciate helpful directions regarding Levant “dispute” sent me in UNdel 191.87

Informal conversations are continuing between French, British, Syrian and Lebanese representatives here in hope that mutually agreeable formula for “negotiations” may be found prior to presentation of case to SC. Our general impression is:

That French, who particularly wish negotiations to take place in Paris, are making every effort to reach common accord short of agreeing that negotiations have as major objective the fixing of a time limit for withdrawal of their troops;

86 See Department’s telegrams 2386 to Moscow and 10209 to London, both dated November 23, Foreign Relations, 1945, vol. viii, pp. 448 and 450, respectively.

87 Supra.
That if this latter is clearly recognized Syrians may agree to some formula for negotiations providing that matter remain of continuing concern to SC;

That Lebanese have come to view negotiations under aegis of SC as such important forward step that they would accept less precise formula to assure them; and

That British, now showing growing concern lest Russians make further propaganda capital out of SC public discussion of dispute, are anxious that Syrians and Lebanese agree to French formula that negotiations may be undertaken on understanding suggested by French that neither French nor British Government interprets their December 13 accord as implying an intention to maintain troops in Levant in event that SC not take decisions regarding collective security in that zone.

Indication of this British apprehension is following remark said by Faris el-Khoury to have been made to him by Bevin last evening: “I am not at all pleased with the way your conversations are going. I want the matter settled. You should agree with the French peacefully. I don’t want the Soviets to make it a new means for attacking us. I am tired of that sort of thing. My Ministers met for 3 hours today; they are insisting that I withdraw our troops.”

Today, according to the French, there was a further and disquieting development. The French tell us that the day before yesterday night they had agreed with the Lebanese on a statement to be made by Bidault which would be acceptable as a basis for negotiation and thus permit the Council to dispose of the case. The French statement contained the interpretation of the December 13th accord set forth above, and indicated that “the problem is conditioned by certain difficulties of a technical nature”. The Lebanese delegation found this acceptable but said they would have to clear it with the Syrians. This morning the Lebanese informed the French that to their great regret the Syrians could not accept this and consequently felt themselves impelled to make a vigorous presentation of their complaints against French action in Syria and would contend that the Council should take jurisdiction of the matter. The French told the Lebanese to inform the Syrians that obviously in that case Bidault would have to make a defense in case. The situation is therefore that while the Lebanese and the French and British had agreed on a basis of negotiation which would be acceptable the Syrians will not accept it, and in the circumstances, while regretting this decision, the Lebanese feel they must stand by the Syrians.

We understand that Bevin is seeing chief Syrian delegate Khouri today.

STETTINIUS
The Secretary of State to the United States Representative at the United Nations (Stettinius)

SECRET

WASHINGTON, February 15, 1946—7 p. m.

US URGENT

1568. UNdel 216. For Stettinius from the Secretary. Urteil 1839, February 14, DelUN 324. We have noted that French are making every effort to reach common accord short of agreeing that negotiations have as major objective the fixing of a time limit for withdrawal of their troops. Dept feels that if there seems to be impasse in efforts to obtain consent of all parties to negotiation and if the Syrians and Lebanese continue to insist that such an objective be agreed upon as a prerequisite to the commencement of negotiations, you should support them. Likewise Syrians desire that matter remain of continuing concern to Security Council even though negotiations are agreed upon should also be supported. (Urteil 1553, February 8, DelUN 245.)

Should it be impossible to obtain a satisfactory basis upon which negotiations may be carried out between the parties, Dept feels that matter should be classified as “dispute” as distinguished from a “situation” on basis of information thus far received.

Also, in the event that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory basis for negotiations and the SC must make recommendations, it is suggested that you support the setting of a reasonable time limit for the evacuation of the foreign troops in Syrian and Lebanese territories.

BYRNE

The Chargé in Syria (Porter) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

DAMASCUS, February 18, 1946—noon.

[Received February 19—10:24 a.m.]

39. Prime Minister requested me to call on him this morning. He spoke bitterly and pessimistically concerning outcome of Security Council deliberations on Levant question. He stated that it would have been better had the Americans presented no proposition, and that among great powers only Russian policy seemed clear and precise. At this point I reminded him of that part of Mr. Stettinius' statement which outlined US policy as supporting the speedy evacuation of foreign troops from United Nations territory adding that Mr. Stettinius had made specific mention of American support for Syrian and Lebanese desires in that respect. He agreed that this was precise enough but regretted that our proposal “did not enjoy

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38 For an account of the deliberations of the Security Council on the Syrian-Lebanese question, which took place from February 14 to 16, see telegram 962, March 1, to Paris, p. 775, and bracketed note, p. 776.
the same quality”. He particularly objected to lack of time limit for evacuation and said that failure to confine character of negotiations to technical matters would be used by French in attempt to extract privileges from Syria as quid pro quo of evacuation. I urged him to await return of his delegation before adopting too pessimistical viewpoint.

Though there has been insufficient time to complete survey of Syrian opinion, it is becoming evident that so far as local Arabs are concerned, only power to change [emerge] from deliberations with increased prestige is Soviet Union.

Sent Dept as 39, repeated London for Wadsworth UNdel.

Porter

S90D.01/2-2346 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

LONDON, February 23, 1946—3 p. m.

[Received 9:40 p.m.]

2243. From Wadsworth. 1. Lebanese Foreign Minister Frangié reviewed for me yesterday his discussions with French and British here following Security Council’s consideration of Levant “dispute” substantially as follows:

On February 18 he received Ostrorog who reiterated Bidault’s undertaking to negotiate on basis American resolution and suggested early negotiations in Paris. He replied he was wholly prepared to negotiate but that it might add to difficulty of inducing Syrians to do so were French to insist on Paris as venue. Could not negotiations be held in London, he asked, if only to expedite matters and because all parties were present?

On February 19 he and chief Syrian delegate Khouri met with Bevin who stated he wished to clear up case promptly through quadrilateral negotiation, that this was also Bidault’s wish and that as for British “they would talk only regarding military questions”. Bevin added that Syrians and Lebanese would do well not to object to Paris as venue. He replied substantially as to Ostrorog. Khouri, however, while recognizing that all parties were bound to negotiate, said he could not agree without further instructions from Damascus.

On February 20 in discussion with Massigli, he was told that French wished discussions to include other questions related to withdrawal of troops. He replied that, once agreement on withdrawal was concluded, he perceived no objection to discussion of other matters; were this agreed he would immediately ask Beirut to authorize his negotiating in Paris. Massigli undertook to consult Paris.
On February 21, Massigli telephoned that Paris had replied it was willing to negotiate with respect to military questions only.

Same day he received telegram from Beirut informing him of similar proposal made there by Beynet and saying that, while Syrian Government had not consented to his going to Paris to talk in name of both states, he might go himself in personal capacity. He replied that present opportunity should not be missed and recommended official acceptance of French invitation irrespective of Syrian action, British having meanwhile told him they were prepared to open military discussions with French promptly.

On February 22 he received another telegram from Beirut authorizing Paris visit to make official contact provided Syrian delegation also go. He proposed to reply that Syrian delegation has no authorization to go but that he, nevertheless, wishes to do so “to conduct negotiations regarding withdrawal of troops exclusively”, adding “if and when agreement is reached on major lines, it can be accepted and signed by the four countries”.

2. In subsequent conversation, February 22, with Khouri he confirmed to me the foregoing outline of recent developments and said he was prepared either to enter into quadrilateral negotiations here or to see Frangié carry out his plan of conducting French-Lebanese negotiations in Paris.

He stressed that at conversation of February 19 with Bevin, latter had undertaken to discuss only question of withdrawal of troops and to ascertain from French what if any other questions they wished to include. He had as yet received no such list, but was encouraged by Massigli’s reply to Frangié.

On balance he preferred Frangié’s plan both because it was still difficult for Syrians to negotiate with French other than through Syrian Minister in Paris and because, now that British and French had apparently agreed to withdraw completely from Syria at early date, major question remaining at issue was withdrawal from Lebanon, details of which Lebanese could best discuss alone with French.

(Note: In connection with reported Anglo-French agreement as to early complete withdrawal from Syria, Embassy is reporting con-

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**Note:** The Chargé in Lebanon, in telegram 108, February 23, transmitted to the Department the text of a communiqué issued by the Lebanese Government on February 22, which stated:

“Following the declarations made by the British Foreign Secretary Mr. Ernest Bevin and the French Foreign Minister Mr. Georges Bidault to the effect that they considered their countries bound by Mr. Stettinius’ proposal before the Security Council to open negotiations for the withdrawal of foreign troops re-grouped in Lebanon, the French Government has suggested to the Lebanese and Syrian Governments that the negotiations be held in Paris without delay.

“The Lebanese Government in agreement with the Syrian Government has decided to accept the invitation.

“Accordingly the Lebanese Government has instructed its delegation in London to proceed to Paris and to open negotiations for a speedy withdrawal of foreign troops in accordance with the declaration referred to above.” (890E.01/2-2446)
firmatory statement made February 22 by head of British Foreign Office, Eastern Department.)

Khoury concluded substantially as follows: "The Lebanese plan is a good one. It should please our Government which does not want to negotiate about our country. Bevin has said our country must be evacuated entirely as a first step in withdrawal from the two countries. I prefer to postpone our participation in negotiation until that is done."

He too had received telegram that morning from his Government; he would give me its four principal points and his reply to each:

First, it asked his view as to whether negotiations should be undertaken. In reply he reiterated his opinion that Syria was bound to do so by article 33 of the United Nations Charter.

Second, it asked his view as to Paris as venue. He replied that French are most insistent thereon and Bevin advises it but that he had put off answering pending receipt of promised note from Bevin regarding subjects of negotiations.

Third, it insisted that there be no negotiations anywhere with any French who had been responsible for use of force against Syria last May. He replied that this could be avoided by negotiating elsewhere than in Levant, adding that Ostrorog had assured him it was not French intention to have Beynet participate.

Lastly, it asked that should Lebanese delegation remain to negotiate in London, he also remain to participate. He reiterated that he was awaiting Bevin's reply but believed it unwise to risk losing substance, i.e. withdrawal of troops, by hesitating over details of place or form.

In conclusion, Khoury said he hoped Department might share his views, first as to advisability of Lebanese negotiating now alone with French in Paris, it being understood that Anglo-French military discussions will be begun at same time, and, second, that it would be wiser for Syrians to defer their participation in negotiations pending complete military withdrawal from Syria. If so, he suggested that Department might instruct our Chargé d’Affaires in Beirut and Damascus to indicate to Prime Ministers (both Acting Ministers of Foreign Affairs) that it believed the suggested action would be in keeping with spirit of American resolution to Security Council.\(^{40}\)

3. I have air passage to Cairo February 27.

Sent to Department as 2243; repeated to Beirut as 13, to Paris as 147. [Wadsworth.]

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\(^{40}\) By telegram 1803, February 26, 7 p.m., to London (repeated to Damascus and Beirut), the Secretary of State informed Mr. Wadsworth: "While views expressed by Faris al-Khoury regarding negotiations with French and British as set forth in your 2248, Feb 23, from London seem sound, questions raised by him in penultimate paragraph thereof are mainly of procedural nature concerning which Dept does not feel it necessary or wise to advise Syrian and Lebanese Govts. Dept does of course hope that Syrians will be as cooperative as possible in arranging details of negotiations in order not to jeopardize their successful outcome." (890D.01/2-2346).
SECRET

LONDON, February 23, 1946—3 p. m.
[Received 11:35 p. m.]

2245. In discussing situation re prospective four-party negotiations
on troop withdrawal from Levant States Baxter, head of Eastern
Dept Foreign Office, told us that question is obscure and no decision
reached as yet on time or place. Re possibility of introducing other
items into discussion he said there was no doubt that French were
hoping to expand agenda to include such matters as schools but he
indicated that this too remained up in the air.

Asked where in circumstances matter now stands, Baxter said that
as far as British are concerned plan is to approach French immedi-
ately on military angle of question and to urge that evacuation of
Syria be completed as soon as possible and that April 30 had been
mentioned as final date. Re Lebanon British also intend urging
earliest possible evacuation but French so far have indicated reluc-
tance to consider final date for completion of withdrawal. In view of
way matter was left by Security Council, however, British intend
strongly to press French to fix final evacuation date for Lebanon and
if they fail, to proceed with fixing a date for completion of British
withdrawal. Baxter added that all this was, of course, subject to
change in the course of negotiation but that it represented the way
Mr. Bevin’s mind is running at present, and he observed that this
sequence of discussions is in accordance with the December 13 agree-
ment which had envisaged that agreement on military level should be
completed between British and French before consulting with Syrians
and Lebanese.

Sent to Dept as 2245; repeated to Beirut as 14, to Paris as 148.

WINANT

WASHINGTON, February 25, 1946—10 p. m.

1786. For Wadsworth from Henderson. I have learned from re-
turning members of American delegation that US resolution on
Syrian-Lebanese demand for withdrawal of foreign troops was
actually introduced in Feb 16 meeting of Security Council at specific
request of Faris al-Khoury contained in a penciled note to you during the session, but that when Khoury spoke subsequent thereto he did not indicate any support or satisfaction with the American resolution. I understand that this was due to further instructions he received from Syrian Govt during intermission.

You, of course, are familiar with these events and in view of rather bitter criticism of our position made to Porter by Jabri (Damascus 39, Feb 18) we feel strongly that it is incumbent on Khoury to inform Jabri as soon as possible of true facts regarding US position at Security Council, of which you know all details. If Khoury is unwilling to do this himself, then we consider you upon your return to Levant should explain situation to Jabri making it clear to him that US position was in full conformity with policy which this Govt has adopted throughout in support of Syrian and Lebanese desire for withdrawal of foreign troops from their territory.

Sent to London, repeated to Cairo, Damascus, Beirut. [Henderson]  

[Byrnes]

[Part of the Syrian delegation at the UN meeting at London returned to Damascus on February 27. The following morning, Nazem al-Kudsi, Syrian Minister to the United States and member of the delegation, informed Mr. Porter that he had already given to the Prime Minister complete details of the American position including the fact “that American proposal was presented as result of note which Kudsi drafted and Khoury signed. Kudsi told Jabri that had Americans not made proposal, weak and unsatisfactory Dutch proposal would have been urged by Bevin.” (telegram 41, February 28, from Damascus, filed under 890D.01/2-2846). On April 13, Mr. Porter reported in despatch 422: “The pessimistic and critical reaction of Premier Jabri to the American proposal, as reported earlier, resulted, he informed us in rather embarrassed fashion some days later, from the fact that Faris Bey had completely neglected to keep the Government informed on developments in London . . .” (890D.00/4-1346.)

890D.01/2-2846: Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Gallman) to the Secretary of State

SECRET  

LONDON, February 26, 1946—7 p. m.  
[Received February 26—5:14 p. m.]

2324. When taking leave of Frangié and Khouri today Wadsworth was informed that Lebanese delegation consisting of Frangié, Riad Solh and Joseph Salem will proceed to Paris February 28 to open
negotiations with the French regarding withdrawal of troops from Levant.

Khoury asserted that French here have never extended invitation to Syrian delegation to visit Paris at this time. However, British having said they wish Syrian rep to participate in quadrilateral negotiations, preferably following Anglo-French military experts’ discussions which are opening in Paris today, and Syrian Govt having accepted in principle, Khouri is remaining in London to await developments. Other members of Syrian delegation have left for Damascus. You are probably aware that on February 24 British Minister Shone handed aide-mémoires to Syrian and Lebanese Govt. Text as telegraphed Frangié makes following four points:

(1). Pursuant to British acceptance of majority view of Security Council, British Govt is sending military rep to Paris “to discuss with the French the best means of withdrawing our troops as soon as possible and fixing the date when the evacuation will be completed”.

(2). “This resolution alone must determine their (i.e. British Govt’s) future action”.

(3). British Govt considers itself no longer bound by assurances of December 15 “that they had no intention of withdrawing British troops from either Syria or Lebanon in such way as to leave the French there alone”.

(4). British Govt hope to be able to arrange with the French for a simultaneous withdrawal but if that is not possible British forces will be withdrawn in any case.

Khoury concluded by saying that he hoped American Govt, like Security Council, would keep matter of continuing interest and, if negotiations lag, reaffirm to French Govt its concern lest any undue delay in adjustment (notably in fixing outside time limit for complete withdrawal) have disturbing repercussions in Levant and other Arab countries.**

Sent Dept as 2324 repeated Paris as 156 and Beirut as 15.

GALLMAN

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**In connection with this paragraph, the Department suggested, in telegram 1918, March 1, to London (repeated to Paris and to Beirut for Damascus), that the Chargé inform Mr. Khouri “that Dept will indeed continue to interest itself in withdrawal of foreign troops from Syria and Lebanon and is informing American Amb in Paris of its continued concern that a satisfactory arrangement be speedily agreed to.” (800D.01/2-2646)
The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Caffery) 42

SECRET

WASHINGTON, March 1, 1946—8 p. m.

US URGENT

962. In connection with Anglo-French conversations now being carried on in Paris re withdrawal of foreign troops from Levant States and proposed quadrilateral conversations on same subject Dept assumes you are informed of details of discussions on this subject in Security Council meeting in London. You will recall that subject was first raised in Feb 14 meeting entire session of which was devoted to discussion of procedural aspects of Syrian-Lebanese case, principal point in debate being whether question was a "dispute" or a "situation". While question was not decided, US was prepared to support Syrian-Lebanese contention that it was a dispute. Both sessions on Feb 15 were devoted to presentation of case by Lebanese and Syrian representatives and replies by French and British in which other members, especially Vyshinsky, participated. Stettinius made following important statement:

"In regard to the substance of the question that is before the Council I would like to make clear briefly the views of my Government.

"The general policy of the United States is to support and encourage the rapid withdrawal of foreign troops from the territory of any member of the United Nations occupied during the war if the Government of that member state desires their departure.

"This general position of my Government has been made plain on a number of occasions. In conformity with this general policy I wish to express the hope of the United States Government that the desires of the Syrian and Lebanese Governments that the foreign troops in their territory should depart at the earliest practicable moment shall be met by means of a mutually satisfactory agreement to that effect."

During morning session of 16th Stettinius offered following resolution:

"The Security Council takes note of the statements made by the four parties and by the other members of the Council; expresses its

42 In a memorandum to Loy W. Henderson, Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, on March 1, Benjamin V. Cohen, the Counselor of the Department, stated:

"I have signed for the Secretary the telegram to Paris regarding the Anglo-French conversations concerning Syria and Lebanon. While I have no doubt that the case presented to the Council involved a dispute, I have serious doubt whether it was established that Britain was a party to the dispute in view of the fact that the Syrians and Lebanese admitted that they did not wish British troops withdrawn before the French troops were withdrawn.

"The Syrians and Lebanese, however, refused to admit expressly when questioned by Bevin that the British were not parties to the dispute, merely indicating that the record could speak for itself. This had a profoundly disturbing effect on Bevin and I have no doubt is the reason why the British no longer feel bound to defer their withdrawal until it can be simultaneous with the French withdrawal." (896D.01/3-146)
confidence that the foreign troops in Syria and Lebanon will be withdrawn as soon as practicable and that negotiations to that end will be undertaken by the parties without delay, and requests the parties to inform the Security Council of the results of the negotiations." 43

During afternoon session Mexican and Egyptian resolutions were defeated,44 whereupon Vyshinsky proposed three amendments to US resolution, which also failed. Original US resolution then received seven votes. Failure of USSR to vote affirmatively however defeated motion. French and Brit representatives then stated that although not voting on US proposal (they had announced their intention of abstaining from voting without admitting that they were parties to a dispute) they approved it and intended to act as if it had been passed.

In light of foregoing Dept desires you to keep in close touch with French Foreign Ministry and British Embassy on current developments and to lose no opportunity to impress upon Bidault and other French officials importance which Dept attaches to early withdrawal of all foreign troops from Syria and Lebanon.

Sent Paris, repeated London and Beirut for Damascus.

[The Security Council discussed the complaint against the presence of French and British troops in Syria and Lebanon at five successive meetings from February 14 to 16. The record of these meetings is published in United Nations, Official Records of the Security Council, First Year, First Series, No. 1, pp. 272, 283, 296, 318, and 336. The United Nations has given its account of the deliberations in Yearbook of the United Nations, 1946-47, p. 341. The Soviet vote against the United States resolution represented the first instance of the exercise of the veto in the history of the Security Council. Apparently, the Council took no formal action to remove the Syrian-Lebanese question from its agenda but it engaged in no further discussion on the matter after February 16. The “Report of the Security Council to the General Assembly Covering the Period from 17 January to 15 July 1946” noted, however, that the Council was “no longer seized” of the question (United Nations, Official Records of the General Assembly, First Session, First Part, Supplement No. 1, p. 56).]

43 For full text of Mr. Stettinius’ statement, see United Nations, Official Records of the Security Council, First Year, First Series, No. 1, p. 300.
44 A Netherlands resolution on the matter was withdrawn.
The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

PARIS, March 4, 1946—6 p. m.

[Received March 4—4:33 p. m.]

1043. Dept's 962 of March 1. British Embassy, Paris, states agreement was reached Saturday 34th between British and French Military Delegation re evacuation of Syria. As indicated in their communiqué, to be issued today, evacuation of British and French troops from Syria will begin March 11 and be completed April 30. Bulk of British troops will be deployed into Iraq, Indian troops to be repatriated, a few hundred to be deployed into Lebanon. French troops remaining in Syria will retire to Lebanon.

Discussions re evacuation of Lebanon are continuing. According to British Embassy, French propose Beirut be evacuated and British troops be grouped south of Beirut and French troops, north. British delegates question practicability of this because of importance of Beirut as leave center headquarters and base for subsequent evacuations.

British state French have accepted principle of eventual complete evacuation of Lebanon but contend evacuation must be gradual and cannot be completed in less than a year because of problem involved in dismantling long-established French bases and transportation of large military stocks. This problem does not exist for British who are prepared to evacuate within short period. French are insisting that at least a token force of British troops remain until French evacuation completed. French have requested transit facilities for 1,000 troops in Suez area for men to be forwarded to Madagascar and Indo-China.

No Syrian delegates are expected to arrive in Paris. Lebanese delegates remaining here have no authority to discuss other than details of evacuation and British feel no political discussions will take place in Paris at this time.

Sent to Washington as 1043; repeated to Beirut as 5; repeated to London as 180.

Caffery

34th March 2.
890D.01/3-546: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Lebanon (Mattison) 46

SECRET

WASHINGTON, March 5, 1946—6 p. m.

81. If you are asked by authorities of Levant States re attitude this Govt in case simultaneous withdrawal Brit and French troops cannot be arranged, you may say that in our view, while complete withdrawal all Brit and French troops greatly to be preferred, we would look with favor on any withdrawal in view our basic attitude regarding continued presence of foreign troops in territory of members of United Nations. Consequently we feel that British withdrawal regardless of French action, and vice versa, would be in line with the policy which we have publicly enunciated.

Sent Beirut, repeated Damascus, Paris and London.

Byrnes

890D.01/3-946: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

PARIS, March 9, 1946—noon.

US URGENT

[Received 12:14 p. m.]

1134. Mytel 1043, March 4. British Embassy, Paris, reports agreement reached with French re withdrawal from Lebanon. British and French will immediately evacuate 1,000 troops each 46 and final British evacuation to be completed by June 30. French evacuation and redeployment to be in three stages: first, involving partial evacuation of Beirut, regrouping of troops in Tripoli area and discharge of certain auxiliary forces, to be completed June 30; second stage, completion of evacuation of Beirut and withdrawal of further troops from Lebanon, to be completed by end August; third stage, final evacuation of French troops from Tripoli, to be completed by April 1, 1947.

Before issuing communiqué on agreement, French and British decided Lebanese should first be informed by means of joint note. French draft of this note is now under consideration in London. British Embassy here feels FonOff may object to paragraph in proposed note explaining reasons for delay in final French evacuation. 46

46 In an undated, informal note to Under Secretary of State Acheson, Mr. Henderson stated: “This telegram is being sent at the urgent informal request of the British Govt which feels that its decision to withdraw troop[s] from Syria and Lebanon regardless of what the French do is being unfairly criticized by the Syrians and Lebanese.”

46 In telegram 2726, March 7, 7 p. m., the Chargé in London had reported information from the Foreign Office that the purpose of the withdrawal of the 1,000 British and French troops was to avoid increasing the number of French troops in Lebanon following their withdrawal from Syria (890D.01/3-746).
since this might be taken as indicating British approval and support of French thesis (which is that extensive French installations and military stocks cannot be evacuated in less than year).

According to British, French are extremely unhappy re whole agreement and somewhat resentful over British refusal to maintain at least token force in Lebanon until French evacuation completed. Sent to Washington as 1134; repeated to London as 190; repeated to Beirut as 6.

Caffery

S90E.01/3-1946: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

PARIS, March 19, 1946—5 p. m.
[Received March 19—4:40 p. m.]

1325. Ostrorog (who has just returned to Paris from a brief trip to the Levant where he went to explain the French position to the Lebanese) tells me that the Lebanese reply to the French note concerning the evacuation of Lebanon has not as yet been received. He said that the FonOff understands the desire of the Lebanese to have the evacuation of French troops completed at the earliest possible date but for practical reasons, including the acute shortage of shipping, it is impossible for the French to evacuate Lebanon as soon as the English do. Nonetheless, he said that Foreign Ministry hopes that arrangements can be made with the Lebanese which will permit the French to have completed their evacuation by end of next December. He added that the French still hope the British will leave a token force in Lebanon until French evacuation is completed.

When asked when the French intend to discuss with the Lebanese such questions as a consular convention, French business and educational institutions, etc., Ostrorog replied that the French naturally attached great importance to satisfactory agreements on these subjects but added that until satisfactory agreement had been reached on the evacuation of troops it would be a great error for the French to mix the two questions. "Should we bring up questions relating to such French interests in Lebanon during the military discussions on evacuation, the Lebanese would quite naturally interpret such a move as an attempt by us to blackmail them into granting wider concessions in return for the removal of French troops. This is the last thing the French wish to have happen", and added that "at this time the most important thing is to conclude a satisfactory agreement on evacuation with no strings attached to it."

Referring to possible future negotiations relating to French cultural, educational and business interests in the Levant States, Ostrorog said in confidence that the FonOff felt that before the French
discuss such questions with the Levant States it would be wise for them to have informal and unofficial exchanges of views with Great Britain and the US with a view to ascertaining the views of ourselves and the British so that the French would not find themselves pursuing an independent course. He said that in such event the French Embassies in London and Washington would probably be empowered to have such informal conversations.47

Sent Dept 1325; repeated Beirut 8, London 211.

CAFFERY

890E.01/3-2346: Telegram

The Minister to Syria and Lebanon (Wadsworth) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

BEIRUT, March 23, 1946—12 a.m.

[Received 1:20 p.m.]

152. Lebanese Foreign Office yesterday gave me copy of note dated March 20 from French Govt to Lebanese Legation in Paris re date for final evacuation of French troops from Lebanon. Text will be forwarded by airmail.

This note after reviewing negotiations between French and British military experts, in which French experts set date of April 1947 for final evacuation, states that subsequent negotiations with Lebanese delegation explored ways by which Lebanese help in evacuation and advance date thereof. As a result of French Govt requests Lebanese collaboration notably as follows:

1. That Lebanese gendarmerie, police and administrative organization would place workers at disposition of French commander for transportation and embarkment of material.
2. That Lebanese army would furnish materials and special equipment, as well as guards for installations.
3. That a joint Franco-Lebanese état-major48 be established to aid French and Lebanese commanders in task of evacuation.

47 In commenting on the last two paragraphs of this telegram, the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Merriam) informed the Division of Commercial Policy in a memorandum of March 26: "... the French appear to be adopting a much more conciliatory and cooperative attitude in their approach to the matter of regularizing their relations with the Levant States through the eventual negotiation of conventions relating to cultural, educational and commercial interests. From the final paragraph it would appear that we may receive at any time from the French a suggestion that we concert with them and the British in negotiations relating to cultural, educational and business matters. We doubt very much whether we want to present a common front with the French and the British on these matters, but in view of this welcome evidence of a desire on the part of the French to cooperate with us and Great Britain, it occurs to us that we shall have to have an answer ready for the French and that it might be well for us to inform the French of the treaty which we propose to negotiate with Lebanon." (890E.01/3-1946) For information on the proposed treaty, see footnote 71, p. 790.
48 General Staff.
Note continues that, on basis of full and efficient collaboration, and subject to Lebanese Govt's approval of plan, French combatant troops would leave Lebanon by August 31, with no more than 30 officers and 300 technicians left to assume control of transport of material. This remaining contingent to leave Lebanon by end of year.

Note concludes by stating that in response to wish of Lebanese Govt French desire to assure withdrawal of majority of combatant troops before June 30, projected Franco-Lebanese état-major to be charged with proposing to French commander the measures to facilitate realization of such program.49

In meantime French aircraft carrier Dixmude has arrived, and is scheduled to depart tomorrow with approximately 1,100 French troops.

Sent Dept as 152; repeated Paris as 24; paraphrases to Arab capitals.

WADSWORTH

[French and British troops completed their departure from Syria on April 15. A three-day celebration at Damascus was attended by representatives of all Arab states, except Yemen, and of the Arab League. "Keynote theme in official circles has been that after five centuries of foreign domination Syria, now most truly independent of Arab states, may again contribute in full measure to realization of Arab aspirations." (890D.01/4-2446, 4-1946)]

The evacuation of Lebanon was also carried out on schedule. The British Command (British Troops, North Levant) was liquidated as of June 30. The disposition of fixed installations and the settlement of claims became the responsibility of the newly-created British Liquidation Staff, North Levant, which was expected to complete its work in 3 months. French forces, numbering 7,500 in March were reduced to 2,600 as of June 30 (890E.01/7-546). The Franco-Lebanese General Staff announced, in a communiqué, that the Commanding General of French forces and the last of his military units would depart on August 30, leaving behind a liquidation staff (851.24590D/8-2846). The withdrawal of this staff was announced on December 24.

49 The French proposals to the Lebanese Government were formalized in a letter of March 25 from Mr. Bidault to Mr. Frangié and were accepted by the latter in his reply of the same day. The French and British Representatives at the United Nations sent letters dated April 30 and May 1, respectively, to the President of the Security Council, setting forth the arrangements for the withdrawal of French and British troops from Syria and Lebanon. In a letter of May 9, Mr. Frangié informed the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the satisfaction of his Government with the Franco-Lebanese accord. On May 19, Premier Jаб′r telegraphed the President of the Security Council that foreign troops had been evacuated from Syria. The texts of the six messages are published in the "Report of the Security Council to the General Assembly Covering the Period from 17 January to 15 July 1946", pp. 107-113.
The Lebanese Chamber of Deputies met on December 30 for the first time since total withdrawal of foreign troops. In opening the session, Prime Minister Riad Solh “expressed appreciation of execution by ‘interested powers’ of undertakings to withdraw troops. ‘I wish to make it clear,’ he said, ‘that those undertakings were carried out without the slightest default.’” (890E.082/12–3146)

REQUEST BY THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT FOR A UNITED STATES MILITARY MISSION TO TRAIN SYRIAN MILITARY AND SECURITY FORCES

890D.20 Missions/5–846

Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Henderson)

[WASHINGTON,] May 20, 1946.

You may recall that several months ago the Syrian Government requested us to send a military training mission to Syria. At the Under Secretary’s direction, we inquired as to the British and French attitudes. The British were lukewarm and thought that a military mission from a small neutral might be the answer. The French said they would regard our sending a mission to Syria as an “unfriendly act.”

The matter has simmered along as we had some hope that when enabling legislation should be passed, the French attitude might have changed.

The necessary legislation has now been passed by the House and may be passed by the Senate in the near future. The British have come to us again, this time on a different tack, and urged us to send a mission to Syria, on the ground that a strong power should undertake the job. The French, when asked whether their attitude had changed, replied that while they would not regard an American mission as an “unfriendly act,” still they would “not regard it as a friendly act.” In addition to citing the sensitiveness of Paris on this matter, they argued that if any of the western Great Powers should undertake such a mission, Soviet Russia would demand similar or compensatory privileges in Syria.

51 Addressed to the Under Secretary of State (Acheson) and the Director of the Office of European Affairs (Matthews).
52 In telegram No. 1, January 2, 1946, the Legation in Damascus had reported receipt of a note from the Syrian Foreign Office dated December 26, 1945, which suggested that, since the U.S. Government due to “legal difficulties” had not been able to comply with previous Syrian request for a military mission, the War Department in Washington be requested to supply the Syrian Legation with names of qualified officers willing to undertake such work with the Syrian Government. Such officers would be granted proper military rank in the Syrian Army and would wear Syrian uniforms. (890D.20 Mission/1–246)
53 In a note of May 8, not printed.
A new aspect of the question has arisen in view of the fact that Syria, having received no reply from us, has approached the Swedes for a mission; and the French have told the Swedes that France would not object to a Swedish mission.

In view of the foregoing, plus the fact that an American military mission to Syria might find itself in an embarrassing if not impossible position if the United States should, as seems quite likely, become involved in the Palestine question in a manner displeasing to Syria, we propose to reply to the Syrians that there are several rather serious obstacles in the way of furnishing an American military mission; that we nevertheless strongly desire Syria to have the assistance it needs to train its new army; and that, accordingly, we will be glad to support the request Syria is understood to have made to Sweden for such assistance. We would also inform the British and the French of our reply to the Syrians.

I should be glad to know whether you concur in the proposed line of action.

A more detailed memorandum giving the background of this question is attached.55

LOY W. HENDERSON

[In telegram 248, June 10, 1946, 7 p.m., the Department informed the Legation in Beirut that it had given careful and sympathetic consideration to the Syrian request but regretted that “due to various obstacles of legal and technical nature”, it would “not be practicable for US Govt to provide desired military mission or to assist in obtaining American reserve officers for such mission”. The Department stated it would “be glad to support, if Syrian Govt so desires, request which Syria is understood to have made to Sweden for such assistance”. (890D.20 Mission /6-1046)

Notes embodying the substance of telegram 248 were sent to the Syrian Legation and to the French and British Embassies on June 10.]

DECISION BY THE UNITED STATES NOT TO OBJECT TO THE ABOLITION OF THE MIXED COURTS SYSTEM BY SYRIA AND LEBANON 56

The British Embassy to the Department of State

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

In communicating its views upon the subject of the Syrian Mixed Courts in an Aide-Mémoire dated the 10th November, 1945,57 the

54 For documentation on this subject, see pp. 576 ff.
55 Memorandum of May 20 by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Satterthwaite), not printed.
56 For previous documentation on this subject, see Foreign Relations, 1945, vol. viii, pp. 1159 ff.
57 Ibid., p. 1167.
State Department invited the Foreign Office's further observations. It has been impracticable to furnish these observations at an earlier date, owing to the recent preoccupation of His Majesty's Government with negotiations for the withdrawal of French and British troops from the Levant States. A recent British case of some importance has, however, now made it necessary to take up the matter on a limited basis with the Syrian Government.

2. The gist of the Foreign Office's instructions to His Majesty's Minister at Beirut was communicated before despatch to the United States and French Embassies in London. The French Embassy asked that Mr. Shone's instructions should be held up, until they had had time to refer to Paris. The French Embassy have now stated that the French Government do not object to the appointment of "neutral" judges to take the place of French, to work off all cases pending before the Mixed Courts without prejudice to the final settlement of the general question, in which of course France and the United States together with the United Kingdom and other nations are interested, but add that they are about to communicate to the Foreign Office a general memorandum concerning the protection of foreign interests in the Levant States, which will include consideration of how the work hitherto performed by the Mixed Courts should be carried on.

3. To refer specifically to the State Department's memorandum of the 10th November last, Mr. Bevin agrees that the Mixed Courts Régime must be held to have expired with the Mandate, on the basis of articles 5 and 6 of the latter. He takes the view, however, that His Majesty's Government and other Governments which possessed capitulatory rights under the Turkish régime hold in theory a means of pressure on the Syrian Government in the fact that those rights revive in full on the termination of the Mandate; and further that it would hardly be reasonable to forego these rights, unless the Mixed Courts Régime were replaced by some system satisfactory to British interests.

Mr. Bevin is therefore inclined to consider that paragraphs 4-6 of the State Department's memorandum of the 10th November represent an unduly conservative view of the degree of pressure which the Powers can justifiably exercise. He is, however, not prepared to claim a revival of capitulatory rights, but would rather propose to invoke these rights to secure reasonable legal treatment for foreigners.

4. As the State Department are aware, the draft Bill for the abolition of the Mixed Courts at present under consideration by the Syrian authorities is believed to provide for a special tribunal presided over by "a magistrate of international repute from amongst those registered

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For documentation on this subject, see pp. 751 ff.

Ernest Bevin, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
with the International Court at the Hague" to deal with Commercial Cases involving the nationals of those countries which enjoyed capitulatory rights under the Turkish régime. Mr. Bevin considers this a step in the right direction (provided the proposal is one which is likely to be accepted by the Chamber), but thinks that there are strong reasons for pressing for an extension of this arrangement to cover civil cases also.

5. In this connection the provisions of the Montreux Convention of 1937 abolishing capitulations in Egypt may be recalled. The Egyptian Government undertook to maintain the Mixed Courts for a transitional period of twelve years. They were to deal with all civil and commercial cases between foreigners or between foreigners and natives, subject to the proviso that any of the High Contracting Parties who possessed Consular Courts in Egypt might, on so notifying the Egyptian Government when ratifying the Convention, retain such courts for the purpose of jurisdiction in matters of personal status in all cases in which the applicable law was the national law of the High Contracting Party concerned. The term foreigners was defined so as to include nationals of such non-capitulatory powers as might be specified by decree.

6. In the present case, Mr. Bevin considers that the protection of British interests requires a guarantee that, under Syrian law as applied by Syrian courts, foreigners who [are?] also non-Mohammedans shall, in matters of personal status (i.e. marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc.), be dealt with on the basis of their own national law or at least on Western principles. In the Egyptian case referred to above the Mixed Courts were to deal with all matters of personal status affecting foreigners, subject to the proviso mentioned in the preceding paragraph; and by a Declaration annexed to the Montreux Convention the Egyptian Government undertook that, even when the Mixed Courts came to an end on the termination of the transitional period of twelve years (i.e. in 1949), the ordinary Egyptian Courts on taking over would continue to decide such matters in accordance with the foreigner’s own national law.

7. His Majesty’s Embassy will be glad to transmit to the Foreign Office any further observations which, after consideration of this memorandum, the State Department may wish to offer.\

WASHINGTON, March 25, 1946.

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60 For documentation on this subject, see Foreign Relations, 1937, vol. II, pp. 615 ff.
61 The Department replied in a memorandum of April 28 which took note of the views of the British Government and summarized the Department’s discussions with the French Government. The memorandum concluded with the suggestion that “when the French Government has made known its views, the three Governments may wish to join in discussion for the purpose of arriving at a common approach to the Syrian Government.” (890D.05/3-2546)
SECRET

WASHINGTON, March 28, 1946.

A–533. In note dated Mar 13 French Embassy suggested that American, Brit and French Govts consult re attitude which they should assume towards Syria, Lebanon regarding special juridical rights deriving from agreements with Ottoman Empire which these Govts have in Levant following termination of mandate. Note observed that Levant Govts cannot abrogate unilaterally conventions defining status of foreigners, but that changes which they may desire to make in present system might be subject of negotiations and an agreement with Three Powers principally interested. Note asked our views and expressed hope that three Govts can reach agreement and present common attitude to Syria, Lebanon.

On Mar 19 French Embassy requested our views urgently in view of reports from Damascus that Syrian Parliament was about to modify Mixed Courts system. In reply we outlined our views substantially as stated in our aide-mémoire to Brit Embassy of Nov 10, 1945. We also informed French of Brit approach to us and that we awaited Brit reply referred to in Embassy’s 2409 Feb. 28. We added that we would be glad to join discussions with French and Brit. French Embassy later stated it would like to commence these tripartite conversations soon in Paris, London or Washington using our views as basis for discussion without committing selves to acceptance.


ACHESON

890D.05/5–1446: Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister to Syria and Lebanon (Wadsworth)

SECRET

WASHINGTON, May 14, 1946—5 p. m.

185. Brit Govt has informed Dept it is unfavorable at present to joint Franco-British-American representations to Syrian Govt re

Not printed; in handing the note to the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Henderson) on March 14, the French Minister (Lacoste) stated that a similar note had been presented to the British Government by the French Embassy in London (890D.01/3–1346).

This was done by Mr. Lacoste in discussion with officers of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (890D.05/3–2046).

By memorandum of March 19, handed to Mr. Lacoste the same day.


Not printed; the reference is to the anticipated British reply to the Department’s aide-mémoire of November 10, 1945.

In memorandum of April 29, not printed. The Department replied in a memorandum on June 19, which summarized this telegram (No. 185) as well as the reply from Beirut, infra.
Mixed Courts in belief such representations would likely produce an "uncooperative reaction". At same time Brit Govt states it would welcome any support which Dept might be prepared to accord proposal it has already placed before Syrian Govt for appointment of neutral judges.

It is suggested that you inform Syrian Govt and your Brit colleague that although this Govt does not feel it can properly request amendment of Syrian law to enable appointment other foreign judges to replace French judges in Syrian courts, it would nevertheless welcome independent action by Syrian Govt in that sense as a temporary measure. With regard to more permanent arrangements, Dept is inclined to adhere to position outlined in its note of November 9 [10], 1945 to Brit Embassy, and would be glad to know if you concur.

Dept would appreciate being informed of status of any pending American cases.

Please keep Dept currently informed re Syrian and Lebanese thinking or contemplated action re Mixed Courts problem.

ACHESON

890D.05/5-2946 : Telegram

The Minister to Syria and Lebanon (Wadsworth) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

BEIRUT, MAY 29, 1946—6 P. M.

[Received May 30—4:55 p. m.]

253. ReDeptel 185, May 14. 1. New Lebanese Prime Minister Munla, who was Minister of Justice in preceding Cabinet, told me informally May 24 that in his personal view, while Lebanese Government would wish at some later time to consider proposing to Parliament legislation designed to remodel Lebanon's judicial system in keeping with regime of full independence, he perceived no immediate need, as in the case of Syria, for action designed to dispense with Mixed Courts jurisdiction, anomalous though that jurisdiction might be in light of Lebanon's present political relationships and high calibre of Lebanese judges.

2. Some 10 days earlier, Legal Counselor Besley of British Embassy, Cairo, had discussed with me, before proceeding to Damascus for informal conversations with Syrian authorities, the continuing awkward situation in Syria where cases pending before Syrian Mixed Courts at time of French bombardment of Damascus a year ago could not, in absence of any functioning competent jurisdiction, receive any hearing whatsoever.

Besley said that, should he find Syrian authorities unwilling to proceed along lines of earlier British suggestion, now concurred in
by French, that Mixed Courts be reestablished with neutral judges replacing former French judges, he was disposed to suggest that Syrian Government consider setting up special ad hoc jurisdiction to try all pending mixed cases, its bench to be composed of Syrian judges who had formerly sat on Mixed Courts bench assisted by foreign judges to be appointed by Syrian Government from among candidates suggested at that Government's request by International Court of Justice; such special court to continue use of French language.

If Syrian authorities were found to be disposed to proceed along lines of this suggestion for settlement of pending cases, and if appropriate assurances (along lines similar to those suggested in Deptel 88, March 8 68) regarding hearing of personal status cases of non-Moslem British subjects could be obtained, Besley seemed to believe that British Government might properly agree that all new cases be brought before ordinary Syrian courts, appropriate legislation to be voted by Syrian Parliament. I commented that I believed Department would not be unfavorably disposed towards arrangements along such lines.

I was later informed by officer of British Legation that Besley had had friendly but inconclusive meeting with Syrian Prime Minister and had recommended that, in view of expressed American and French interest, British Foreign Office consider further consultation with Washington and Paris.

3. On May 27, I had occasion to enquire informally of Syrian Prime Minister Jabri whether he had found Besley's approach helpful. His reply was a much conditioned affirmative. He was willing that a special bench be administratively constituted to try pending mixed cases. His Minister of Justice might well arrange that Syrian judges who served on former Mixed Courts constitute such bench; many of them had studied in European law schools; all knew French. But he could not consider appointing foreign judges to sit with them. Nor could he include any provision, indicative of such administrative intention, in the bill which his Minister of Justice had prepared and which if approved by Parliament, as he had no reason to doubt, would provide that jurisdiction in all pending mixed cases should lie henceforth solely with the regular Syrian courts.

This was first indication I or British here had had that such a bill had actually been drafted. Yesterday morning Damascus newspapers carried what purported to be its text.

Although I have since learned from Prime Minister that this text was copy of earlier draft and is not to be introduced without consider-

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68 Not printed.
able modification and addition (notably to provide for jurisdiction in new cases) following summary is of interest as indicating trend of official thinking on subject:

Preamble, after referring to great power recognition of independence of Syria "member of UNO founded on principle of equality of sovereignty" and to fact that "question of Mixed Courts has not yet been settled", states that it is not proper that pending cases therein "should remain suspended". Operative clauses provide that all such cases shall be referred to equivalent Syrian courts and that cases not so referred within 3 months shall be dropped.

4. I mentioned in same conversation with Jabri our 1928 exchange of notes with Persia providing that in matters of personal status non-Moslem American citizens in Persia would be governed by their own national law which would be applied by Persian civil courts. Jabri saw no objection to giving similar assurance and said matter would be studied if I would supply him with copy of American-Persian exchange of notes.

5. In conversation yesterday with President Faris [el-] Khoury of Syrian Parliament, he queried informally necessity in latter connection of making exception in Syria for non-Moslem Americans. British Consul, Damascus, however, expressed personal view that his Government would prefer to maintain such exception on ground that British Moslems would prefer in any Moslem country to have personal status cases adjudged by Sharia rather than civil courts.

[Here follows paragraph numbered 6 giving summary of three cases pending before the Syrian Mixed Courts known to involve American interests.]

WADSWORTH

S96D.05/9-1946

The British Embassy to the Department of State

H.M.G. and the Syrian Government are now ready to exchange notes providing for the termination of cases before the mixed courts on the basis of the existing pleading, in French, by a special panel of Syrian judges with mixed court experience. The application to British subjects in Syria of their national law in all cases of personal status would be provided for thereunder.

The United States and French Embassies in London were informed of this before final instructions were sent to H.M. Minister in Beirut

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69 For documentation on this subject, see Foreign Relations, 1928, vol. iii, pp. 734 ff.
70 Handed to the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Merriam) by the First Secretary of the British Embassy (Bromley) on September 19, 1946.
and the French have now asked us to defer the conclusion of an agreement pending Anglo-United States-French consultation in Washington as to the nature of the guarantees we should seek regarding the status of foreigners in Syria. They consider the guarantees secured by the British very limited and state that the U.S. Government are themselves negotiating with the Syrian and Lebanese Legations in Washington, and are engaged in planning “a new judicial regime” in both countries.

H.M.G. do not want to delay the conclusion of the agreement with Syria indefinitely, and before taking further action have instructed the British Embassy in Washington to enquire of the State Department

(a) Whether they see any objection to the proposed agreement.
(b) What is the scope of the arrangement they are negotiating, and in particular whether it would provide any wider guarantees for foreigners than the British agreement.

The French Embassy in London are thought to have suggested that the French Embassy in Washington might discuss the question with the State Department at the same time.

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890.06/12-546: Telegram

The Chargé in Lebanon (Kuniholm) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

BEIRUT, December 5, 1946—3 p.m. [Received 3:51 p.m.]

651. ReLegtels 404, August 7, 572, October 21 and 629, November 16 and Deptel 512, October 25. Director General Foreign Office requests me to transmit to Department herewith a formal request for the abrogation by exchange of letters, of jurisdiction of Mixed Courts to be effective as of end of this calendar year. Fouad Announ states

71 The negotiations concerned a draft treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation with Lebanon. A draft treaty had been informally discussed by Mr. Wadsworth with Lebanese officials in 1945. On July 25, 1946, he formally handed a revised draft treaty to the Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs, pursuant to Department's instruction of July 3. Protracted negotiations took place thereafter at Beirut and Washington but they did not eventuate in the signing of a treaty.

72 At their conversation of September 19, Mr. Bromley indicated that as the matter was of some urgency, he would appreciate an oral reply to the two inquiries. Mr. Merriam replied “with reference to (a) that we saw no objection to the proposed agreement. Regarding (b), Mr. Merriam said that there had been no change in our position ... and that the subject had been dormant since it was last discussed with the British Embassy”. (Memorandum of Conversation, September 21, 1946, by Mr. Colquitt of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, filed under 890D.03/3-2146)

73 None printed.
that British Legation has already exchanged letters to this effect,⁴ and French Legation has given its assent in principle.

According to Foreign Office the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies is prepared, unilaterally, to abolish jurisdiction of Mixed Courts by law to be passed next week, and has only been persuaded by Foreign Office to desist in such action pending an attempt to secure US assent to exchange of letters. In any event, says Ammoun, Parliament will not vote funds for Mixed Courts beyond end of this year.

I have taken opportunity to remind Foreign Office that we were prepared long ago to agree to abolish regime of Mixed Courts, and that if no action in the premises had been taken to date it was simply because treaty negotiations had proceeded so slowly.

KUNIholm

890E.05/12-546 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Lebanon (Lane)

CONFIDENTIAL
Washington, December 17, 1946—6 p. m.

596. Legtels 629, Nov. 16,⁵ and 651, Dec. 5. Re notes exchanged Nov. 13 between FonOff and BritLeg on abolition Mixed Courts. Dept prepared accept extension jurisdiction Lebanese National Courts and considers views agreed upon above notes acceptable as practical solution questions treated therein. At same time Dept requests assurance from Lebanese Govt. that in matters of personal status non-Moslem American citizens in Lebanon will be governed by their own national law which would be applied by Lebanese Civil Courts. However, as stated in Deptel 512, Oct. 25,⁶ Dept unwilling consider abrogation capitulatory jurisdiction separate from treaty.⁷ Leg authorized advise FonOff accordingly.

BYRnes

⁴ In telegram 629, November 16, 1946, 10 a. m., the Chargé in Lebanon reported information from the Lebanese Foreign Office that the exchange had taken place on November 13, subject to confirmation from London. The British agreed to the abolition of the Mixed Courts and suggested that cases pending before these courts should be heard in the Lebanese national courts, the judges to be Lebanese magistrates with experience in the Mixed Courts. The Lebanese Government accepted this suggestion. (890E.05/11-1646) The agreement was formalized in an exchange of notes at Beirut on January 22, 1947. An exchange of similar import between the British and Syrian Governments took place at Damascus on November 1 and 2, 1946. The texts of the two sets of exchanges are published as British Cmd. Nos. 7154 and 7140, respectively.

⁵ Not printed; but see footnote 74, above.

⁶ Not printed.

⁷ See footnote 71, p. 790.
CONFIDENTIAL

BEIRUT, December 26, 1946—11 p. m.
[Received December 26—2:05 p. m.]


Pharoan emphasized Lebanon desire to proceed properly on Mixed Courts matter not unilaterally as Syria did and his particular concern that US be completely satisfied. Ammoun said aide-mémoire instead of exchange of notes covered situation fully and expressed gratification this reply was received before termination Mixed Courts end December. Pharoan said Lebanon will accept for treaty any text on Mixed Courts US suggests.

Repeated London as 47.

LANE

[On December 31, 1946, Beirut reported that in addresses before the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies the previous day, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Justice stated that “abolition of Mixed Courts effective December 31 would end ‘last vestige of special privileges reserved to foreign powers in this country’. Russia had renounced privileges enjoyed since Ottoman Empire. ‘France, Britain and United States have welcomed the abolition in a spirit of friendship and with confidence in our ideals of justice.’” (Airgram A-299, filed under 890E.032/12-3146)]

INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES IN ENTERING INTO AGREEMENTS WITH LEBANON AND SYRIA REGARDING SURPLUS PROPERTY

[Under the terms of an agreement signed at Beirut on February 1, 1948, the United States made available to Lebanon a credit of $5,000,000 to purchase American surplus property. Lebanon was to make payment in United States dollars in ten equal, semi-annual installments beginning March 1, 1947. The interest rate was fixed at 2½%. The United States, however, might require payment of all or any portion of the unpaid balance in Syrian pounds, to be used by the United States Government for ordinary operating and other expenses, including the financing of studies, research, instruction, library operation, and other educational activities (890E.51/1-3146). These arrangements were modified at the suggestion of the United States in a supplemental agreement, signed at Beirut on August 7. This agreement authorized payments in local currency, beginning]
November 1, 1946, for purchases of property by the American Legation and improvements and rehabilitation of its real property (despatch 1311, August 23, 1946, from Beirut, filed under 890E.24/8-2346).

Toward the close of January 1946, the United States offered an agreement to Syria similar to that of February 1 with Lebanon. The Syrian Government did not accept the agreement since the basic law of Syria prohibited the incurring of debt. The United States and Syria, however, entered into various contracts under which the latter purchased American surplus property for United States dollars (telegram 825, May 13, 1946, 3 p. m., from Cairo, filed under 883.24/5-1346).]

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CIVIL AIR TRANSPORT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND LEBANON

[For text of the agreement, signed at Beirut on August 11, 1946, see Department of State, Treaties and Other International Acts Series No. 1632, or 61 Stat, (pt. 3) 2987.]