

MEETING

of

PRESIDENT ANWAR EL SADAT

with the Egyptian Journalists in Teheran

June 19, 1976

In this meeting with a group of Egyptian journalists in Teheran, the President said that the situation in Lebanon is escalating in a serious and dangerous way and that it has reached the stage of foreign intervention.

The President continued : « I have discussed this matter with the Shah and I gave instructions to the Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy to contact the Ambassadors of both France and America in order to communicate messages from me to Washington and Paris. His Majesty, the Shah, has also sent similar messages to them both so as to speedily take rapid and immediate means to stop the deterioration of the situation in Lebanon, to evacuate the subjects and regarding other human problems to avoid any further explosion in the area.

« These efforts have resulted in the possibility of mobilising caravans along the Beirut-Damascus land road peacefully so that foreigners may leave Lebanon, without involvement in military operations that would only further fan the fire. »

President Sadat went on to say that President d'Estaing of France has taken the initiative before the arrival of President Hafez El Assad to Paris, and that he called him on the telephone

in Teheran. « We discussed the modality of treating the situation in Lebanon as well as the attempt to help Syria out of this dilemma wherein it was involved. President d'Estaing has also in the course of this telephone call, renewed his former proposal, as regards his readiness to assume a positive definitive role if asked to do so. I answered that it pleases me to see that the Arab initiative has been successful, but unfortunately it was hindered due to the developments which lately took place, to the emergence of Shamun, as well as other elements and methods aimed at the escalation of the situation. Therefore, our main objective in my talks with His Majesty the Shah were to deal with the situation in Lebanon in all its aspects and to stop the flow of blood :

The President also declared Egypt's approval of a French positive role to be undertaken in this connection, should the recently elected Lebanese Head of State request it, removed from any bias towards one side against another, or in other words, should Sarkis agree to ask for French assistance with the aim of preventing bloodshed with the Syrian and Arab forces. Our foremost concern resides in bringing this flow of blood to an end.

Then, President Sadat stated that the assassination of the American Ambassador is a suspicious operation, the truth about which once revealed will also make clear many facts connected with it. It is evident that any procedure to be taken at present will eventually pave the way for a Syrian withdrawal since it was proved that the Syrian intervention had been a grave error.

« If French security forces enter at the request of the elected President Sarkis we would have no objections. »

As to the proposed mediation of President Sadat between Iran and some Gulf countries, the President replied : « I do not like to use the word « mediation », for my talks with His Majesty

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the Shah were but a review of the entire situation with a particular affirmation of the fact that the Gulf region will never submit to any influence nor will any situation from abroad ever be imposed on it because the people of this region have every right to freedom and self-determination.