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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20520

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July 5, 1982

P: UNDER SECRETARY ~~EAGLEBURGER~~ *Am*

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Larry:

As you know Peter McPherson is presently scheduled to arrive in Beirut Thursday July 8 for a two to three days inspection visit as the President's Relief Coordinator. NEA is strongly supportive of the need for Peter to get into Lebanon as quickly as he can make effective contacts, and we have been working with him closely in support of his trip. Peter is planning to depart Washington Tuesday afternoon.

On July 5, Bob Dillon, who is already working the Lebanese to arrange the visit, flagged the possible need to postpone it somewhat in light of the status of Phil Habib's negotiations. On the basis of our best judgment this evening, I recommend you call Peter to urge that he delay for 5-7 days.

Under the present schedule Peter would be arriving at the critical moment in Phil Habib's pulling together of the package deal and departing just before implementation of the PLO pullout begins. This puts Peter in the situation of trying to deal with preoccupied senior Lebanese officials while press attention is focused on the settlement rather than relief efforts--and risks dragging him into the West Beirut situation at a moment when we cannot now predict what the Israelis may be doing there.

Five to seven days later Peter could come in when implementation of withdrawal is under way and there can be appropriate focus on his relief activities.

If it appears in the next few days that the negotiations might slip for some time with Israeli acquiescence, then Peter should proceed later in the week.

I am still concerned about Peter's going to Israel after Lebanon since this will inevitably raise speculation that he encountered in Lebanon Israeli obstruction of relief efforts and has gone to try to deal with it.

You may wish to draw on the attached points in your phone call to Peter.

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Nicholas A. Veliotos

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