UNCLASSIFIED

FADLALLAH, Muhammad Hussayn LEBANON

FRP: .2,3. 8

B4 4105965   SUR   PAGE 001   NC 4105965
TOR: 0906l0Z MAY 84

DLE
F-1

RR RUEAIIB
ZNR UUUUU ZOC STATE ZZH
UTS4924
RR RUEHC
DE RUEHBL #4418/1 1291013
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 0810l3Z MAY 84
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8357
INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 3039
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2854
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 3900
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 3115
RUEHJI/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 2726
RUEHRH/USELO RIYADH 2676
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 3790
BT
UNCLAS BEIRUT 04418

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PTER, PINR, LE
SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH SHIA CLERIC MUHAMMAD HUSSAYN
FADLALLAH) F4/DLE

1. SUMMARY: FRENCH LANGUAGE BEIRUT WEEKLY "NOUVEAU
MAGAZINE" PUBLISHED AN INTERVIEW WITH SHIA CLERIC
MUHAMMAD HUSSAYN FADLALLAH IN ITS MAY 5 ISSUE.
INTERVIEW WAS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MAGAZINE'S
COVER STORY ABOUT THE SOUTHERN SUBURBS. FOLLOWING
ARE MAIN POINTS MADE BY FADLALLAH IN THE INTERVIEW.
FADLALLAH DENIED BEING ASSOCIATED WITH ANY GROUP
THOUGH HE MAINTAINS RELATIONS WITH ALL ACTIVE FORCES.
LOCAL AND REGIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES PREVENT THE
CREATION OF AN ISLAMIC STATE IN LEBANON.
SECULARISATION IS NOT A REALISTIC SOLUTION TO
LEBANON'S PROBLEMS. BUHHOWITEPAT DECONFESSION-
ALISM MIGHT HELP. DURING FADLALLAH'S VISIT TO
IRAN HE ATTEMPTED TO CONVINCE THE IRANIANS THAT
THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF FOUNDING AN ISLAMIC
REPUBLIC IN LEBANON. THE STATE OF ISRAEL IS A
THREAT BUT THE LEBANESE CANNOT STRUGGLE ALONE
AGAINST IT. FADLALLAH DENIED ANY CONNECTION
WITH THE ATTACKS ON THE FRENCH OR USMC HEADQUARTERS.
ANY SOLUTION IN LEBANON MUST BE BASED ON INTERNAL
AGREEMENT. A YOUNGER GENERATION OF LEADERS MUST
TAKE OVER. COEXISTENCE BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND
MOSLEMS IS POSSIBLE. DIVIDING THE COUNTRY INTO
CANTONS WILL NOT WORK AND WILL ONLY ADD TO THE
PROBLEMS. FADLALLAH ENDED THE INTERVIEW WITH
SOME BIO DATA. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF INTERVIEW.
END SUMMARY.

2. BEGIN TEXT: I AM THE HEAD OF NO MOVEMENT, NOR
OF ANY MILITIA. MY WORK IS THAT OF A MUSLIM

UNCLASSIFIED
100

UNCLASSIFIED

25X1

INTELLECTUAL. I AM A THINKER AND THE AUTHOR OF
A SCORE OF WORKS ON ISLAM. MY FIELD OF ACTION GOES
BEYOND THE FRAMEWORK OF A PARTY OR A MOVEMENT. IT
EXTENDS TO THE MUSLIMS OF THIS COUNTRY AND OF ALL
OTHER COUNTRIES. MY IDEAS MAY BE WELL-RECEIVED
BY THE NEW GENERATION OF MUSLIMS. BUT I HAVE NO
OFFICIAL CAPACITY. I HAVE NO MILITIA; I DO NOT
BELIEVE THAT ARMS CAN RESOLVE ANYTHING, BUT I
HAVE BODYGUARDS BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN THE TARGET
OF ATTACKS.

3. WHAT ARE YOUR RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER SHIA
GROUPS?

--AS A MUSLIM THINKER, I WORK IN THE MUSLIM AREA
IN GENERAL. THUS, I COLLABORATE WITH ALL THE ACTIVE
FORCES ON THE GROUND. I HAVE VERY GENERAL RELA-
TIONS WITH THEM.

WHAT ARE YOUR RELATIONS WITH THE SUNNI GROUPS IN
BEIRUT, PARTICULARLY WITH THE UNION(?) OF MUSLIM
ULAMAS?

--THIS UNION GROUPS SUNNI AND SHIA ULAMAS WHO ARE
WORKING FOR THE UNIFICATION OF ISLAM. THEY ARE
FRIENDS AND WE CONSULT EACH OTHER, BUT I AM NOT
BOUND TO THEM. PERSONALLY, I BELIEVE STRONGLY
IN THE UNIFICATION OF ISLAM. IT WOULD BE A FIRST
STEP IN TRUE COEXISTENCE WITH THE CHRISTIANS;
BECAUSE IT SHOULD CONSIST IN AN OPEN UNIFICATION,
NOT ONE CLOSED IN UPON ITSELF.
AND WITH SHAYKH SAID SHA'BAN?

--A GREAT FRIENDSHIP BINDS US.

YOU THEREFORE AGREE WITH HIM WHEN HE SAYS HE WANTS
TO CREATE AN ISLAMIC STATE IN LEBANON?

--IN SPEAKING THIS WAY, SHAYKH SHA'BAN IS EXPRESSING
AN ABSOLUTIST POINT OF VIEW. IN PRINCIPLE, IT IS
A VALID PROPOSITION AND I AM CONVINCED THAT ISLAM
CAN RESOLVE ALL OF MAN'S PROBLEMS, LEBANESE OR NOT.
BUT THE FOLLOWING QUESTION ARISES: IS IT POSSIBLE
TO APPLY SUCH A SUGGESTION TO LEBANON? IN MY
OPINION, LOCAL AS WELL AS REGIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES
DO NOT PERMIT THE CREATION OF AN ISLAMIC STATE IN
LEBANON. ONE MUST BE REALISTIC. FOR THE MOMENT,
SUCH A PROJECT CANNOT BE REALIZED. THIS IS WHY I

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PTER, PINR, LE
SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH SHIA CLERIC MUHAMMAD HUSSAYN

ENCOURAGE ANY ACTION THAT AIMS AT FACILITATING
COEXISTENCE BASED ON A REAL EQUILIBRIUM, FAR FROM
ANY HEGEMONISTIC IMPULSE OF ONE PARTY OR THE OTHER.

4. IT IS THEREFORE NECESSARY TO SEPARATE RELIGION
AND THE STATE. WHY NOT ADOPT SECULARISATION?

--IN AN ISLAMIC STATE, SEPARATING RELIGION AND STATE
IS NONSENSE. IN LEBANON, SECULARISATION DOES NOT
TIE IN WITH THE MIND OF THE CITIZEN. HE IS NOT
ACCUSTOMED TO REACT IN A SECULAR MANNER. THIS IS
WHY THOSE WHO SPEAK OF SECULARISATION DO SO, IN MY
OPINION, IN ORDER TO SCORE POINTS AND AS BARGAINING
TACTICS. BUT THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IT THEMSELVES. IT
SEEMS TO ME RATHER THAT IN THE CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES,
POLITICAL DECONFESSIONALIZATION COULD RESOLVE MANY

UNCLASSIFIED
101

UNCLASSIFIED

84 4105965   SUR   PAGE 003   NC 4105965
                        TOR: 090610Z MAY 84

PROBLEMS. ON THE CONDITION THAT IT IS NOT PURSUED
TO FULL SECULARISATION.

5. WHAT WAS THE SUBJECT OF YOUR VISIT WITH
AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI AND IRANIAN OFFICIALS DURING
YOUR VISIT TO THAT COUNTRY LAST JANUARY?

--IT WAS A PRIVATE VISIT. I HAD PARTICIPATED IN
ISLAMIC CONGRESSES IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IN INDIA,
AND I TRAVELED THROUGH TEHERAN. I TRIED, IN FACT,
TO CONVINCE THE IRANIAN OFFICIALS OF THE REALITY
OF THE LEBANESE PROBLEM. SOME PEOPLE HAD SAID
TO THEM THAT IT WAS TIME TO CREATE AN ISLAMIC
STATE IN LEBANON. FOR MY PART, I TRIED TO SHOW
THEM THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE. THE ISLAMIC REVOLU-
TION CANNOT COME TO POWER IN LEBANON.

6. WHAT ARE YOUR AREAS OF INFLUENCE IN LEBANON?

--WE HAVE A PRESENCE IN ALL MUSLIM REGIONS OF
LEBANON.

THEY SAY THAT IMAM RAGHEB HARB OF JIBSHIT WAS ONE
OF YOUR PARTISANS?

--YES. THIS IMAM WAS ONE OF MY STUDENTS WHEN I
WAS TEACHING IN NABA'. AS A THINKER, I HAVE MANY
STUDENTS.

7. WILL YOUR CONFLICT WITH IFRAEL END IF THE IDF
WITHDRAWS FROM THE SOUTH, OR IS IT DEEPER THAN
THAT?

--OUR PROBLEM IN LEBANON ILL BE RESOLVED WHEN
ISRAEL LEAVES THE SOUTH. BUT AS MUSLIMS AND AS
LEBANESE, THE PRESENCE OF ISRAEL IN THE REGION
IS A THREAT FOR US. THE EXISTENCE OF THE
ISRAELI STATE IS A COLONIALIST ACT THAT SEEKS TO
BRIFG ABOUT THE CRUMBLING OF THE REGION. BUT THE
LEBANESE ALONE CANNOT STRUGGLE AGAINST THIS FACT,
NOR AGAINST THIS THREAT.

8. THEY SAY THAT YOU GAVE YOUR BLESSING TO THE
PERPETRATORS OF THE ATTACKS AGAINST THE FRENCH
AND AMERICAN HEADQUARTERS.

--THIS IS SUCH A FOOLISH ACCUSATION THAT IT IS
NOT WORTH DENYING. IN FACT THE WASHINGTON POST
CORRESPONDANT ACCUSED ME OF IT. WHEN I ASKED HIM
WHERE HE GOT IT, HE SAID FROM THE KATA'IB
INFORMATION SERVICE. THIS IS WHO HAS PROPAGATED
THIS RUMOR. PERSONALLY, I HAD NOTHING TO DO EITHER
FROM FAR OR FROM NEAR WITH THIS ATTACK. ANYWAY,
SO FAR I AM UNAWARE OF THE IDENTITY OF THE ATTACKERS.

9. WHEN PEOPLE WERE SPEAKING OF THE RETURN OF THE
ADF TO BEIRUT YOU MADE A DECLARATION IN WHICH YOU
SAID THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO BE REALISTIC AND TO
REVISE MISTAKEN CALCULATIONS. WHAT DID YOU MEAN?

--ANY POLITICAL OR MILITARY FORCE, IN ORDER TO
SUCCEED IN ITS ACTION, MUST OBTAIN THE AGREEMENT
OF ALL POLITICAL AND MILITARY FORCES PRESENT ON

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PTER, PINR, LE
SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH SHIA CLERIC MUHAMMAD HUSSAYN

THE GROUND. OTHERWISE, IT WILL TRANSFORM ITSELF

UNCLASSIFIED
102

UNCLASSIFIED

84 4105965   SUR   PAGE 004   NC 4105965
                        TOR: 090610Z MAY 84

QUICKLY INTO A PARTY TO THE CONFLICT AND WILL IN-
CREASE EVEN FURTHER THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PROBLEM.
ANY SOLUTION IN LEBANON MUST PASS THROUGH INTERNAL
AGREEMENT.

BUT IS THIS AGREEMENT POSSIBLE?

--WITH THE TRADITIONAL FIGURES WHO FOR YEARS HAVE
CONTROLLED THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN LEBANON, IT
SEEMS TO BE DIFFICULT. SOME OF THEM WHO HAVE
"RAGED" FOR FIFTY YEARS MUST RETIRE AND GIVE WAY
TO YOUNGER PEOPLE.

BUT THE YOUNGER GENERATION IS EVEN MORE EXTREMIST
THAN THE OLDER ONE. IT HAS NO EXPERIENCE OF CO-
EXISTENCE...

--THIS IS TRUE. THIS NEW GENERATION WAS BORN ON
THE BATTLEFIELD. IT PRACTICES POLITICS WITH A
RIFLE. BUT IF WE MANAGE TO SILENCE THE RIFLE,
IT WILL KNOW HOW TO SPEAK BETTER THAN THE OLDER
GENERATION. THE LATTER IS USING IT TO BARGAIN
WITH, JUST AS IT USES TENSION ON THE GROUND. BUT
WHY NOT LET THE PEOPLE SPEAK WHO, UNTIL NOW, CONTINUE
TO LIVE THE EXPERIENCE OF COEXISTENCE? I DO NOT
THINK THERE WOULD BE ANY GREAT PROBLEM BETWEEN
CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM WORKERS, CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM
STUDENTS, ETC. I LIVED FOR A LONG TIME IN NABA'
AND I NEVER SUFFERED ANY PROBLEM OF THAT KIND.

BUT YOU LEFT NABA'.

--I LEFT TWO DAYS BEFORE THE OCCUPATION OF THAT
NEIGHBORHOOD. MY HUSSAYNIYAH HAD NO MORE REASON
FOR BEING. BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT COEXIS-
TENCE NO LONGER EXISTS. FIGHTING BETWEEN CHRISTIANS
AND MUSLIMS IS NOT ALWAYS DUE TO A CONFESSIONAL
PROBLEM. LET THOSE WHO SQUEEZE THIS COUNTRY IN A
VISE OF HATRED BY TRYING TO SHARPEN CONFESSIONAL
SENTIMENTS LIFT THEIR BLOCKADE AND ALLOW THE PEOPLE
FINALLY TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES FREELY. BECAUSE
FINALLY THE LEBANESE, CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS, ARE
FIGHTING FOR LIFE; ALL ARE SUFFERING FROM THE
ECONOMIC CRISIS, INDEPENDENTLY OF THEIR CONFESSION.

10. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE "CANTONS" FORMULA?

--I DON'T BELIEVE IN IT. I STUDIED IT DISPASSIONATELY,
SCIENTIFICALLY. I READ THE DECLARATIONS OF KARIM
PAKRADUNI AND OTHERS ON THE SUBJECT AND FRANKLY,
THIS PROJECT APPEARS TO ME ILLOGICAL. WHAT IS THE
UTILITY OF THIS FORMULA? THAT MUSLIMS NOT LIVE
UNDER CHRISTIAN DOMINATION AND VICE VERSA? THIS
MEANS THAT IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO EMPTY THE SHUF
OF ALL CHRISTIANS, AS WELL AS THE SOUTH, ETC.
AND IF SOME WISH TO STAY IN THE REGIONS, THEY WILL
MORE THAN EVER FEEL DOMINATED AND THEIR HATRED
WILL BECOME FIERCE. THE COMPLEXITY OF THE
"CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM CONFLICT" WILL BECOME GREATER,
BECAUSE IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO GO INTO DETAIL.
THE GENERAL PROBLEM WILL GIVE BIRTH TO A MULTITUDE
OF LOCAL PROBLEMS THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE.
AN ENORMOUS DISPLACEMENT OF THE POPULATION WILL
BE NEEDED TO OVERCOME THEM. THIS IS NOT EASY TO
CARRY OUT. NO, THOSE WHO PROPOSE THIS FORMULA
ARE NEITHER REALISTIC NOR SERIOUS. ONLY THE UNITARY
STATE, AT THE SERVICE OF ALL THE REGIONS, CAN
RESOLVE OUR PROBLEM.
11. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE NEW KARAMI GOVERNMENT?

UNCLASSIFIED
103

UNCLASSIFIED

(1)

| 84 4105965 | SUR | PAGE 005 | NC 4105965 |

TOR: 090610Z MAY 84

--I THINK THAT THE GREEN LIGHT FOR THE SOLUTION
HAS NOT YET BEEN GIVEN. THIS IS WHY IT IS A
MATTER NOW OF A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT, BUT ALSO
A GOVERNMENT FOR FREEZING THE CRISIS. AN ATTEMPT
IS BEING MADE TO INTRODUCE A RATIONAL ELEMENT INTO
OUR CRISIS SO THAT IT WILL NOT BE A THREAT TO THE
REGION, WHICH IN ITS TURN IS ALSO GOING THROUGH
A SERIOUS CRISIS.

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PTER, PINR, LE
SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH HIA CLERIC MUHAMMAD HUSSAYN

12. SAYID MUHAMMAD HUSSAYN FADLALLAH, COULD YOU
SPEAK TO US OF YOURSELF?

--I AM LEBANESE, FROM AYNATA IN BINT JBAYL. (MY
FATHER STILL LIVES THERE.) MY FAMILY DESCENDS
FROM THE PROPHET. I WAS BORN IN NAJAF (IRAQ).
I STUDIED THERE AND PARTICIPATED IN MANY RELIGIOUS
ACTIVITIES. IN 1966 I ARRIVED IN LEBANON. I
INSTALLED MYSELF IN NABA', WHERE I FOUNDED A SOCIAL
AND CULTURAL INSTITUTION THAT STILL EXISTS. WHEN
NABA' FELL, I CAME TO BIR AL-ABD, WHERE I FOUNDED
AN INSTITUTION FOR ORPHANS IN THE NAME OF THE
IMAM KHO.I (SIC), WHOSE REPRESENTATIVE I AM IN
BEIRU.. IT IS NOT AN HONORIFIC TITLE. IT IS THE
HIGHEST AUTHORITY AT THE LEVEL OF THE SHIITE IJTIHAD
(THE IMAM KHO.I HAS HIS SEAT AT NAJAF). I HAVE
WRITTEN A SCORE OF WORKS ON ISLAM AND I TEACH IN
SEVERAL SCHOOLS.

THEY SAY YOU ARE THE PRINCIPAL RIVAL OF SHAYKH
MUHAMMAD MAHDI SHAMS AD-DIN?

--NO. IT IS OUT OF THE QUESTION. I LIKE TO WORK
FREELY WITHOUT ANY OFFICIAL CAPACITY. END TEXT.
PUGH
END OF MESSAGE   UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

104 v