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FM BEIRUT 101415Z JAN 84

TO IMMEDIATE F.C.O.

TELEGRAM NUMBER 22 OF 10 JANUARY 1984

INFO IMMEDIATE RIYADH (FOR SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTY), DAMASCUS
 ROUTINE WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, JEDDA, PARIS, ROME,
 TEL AVIV, MOSCOW

FCO TELNO 11 TO UKMIS NEW YORK: LEBANON

1. SUMMARY. THE LEBANESE ARE LIKELY TO OPPOSE ALL UN PLOYS FOR BEIRUT BECAUSE THEY DREAD WITHDRAWAL OF THE MNF. DISCUSSION OF A UN ROLE IN PHASE II OF THE SECURITY PLAN OFFERS THE BEST CHANCE OF HOOKING THEM. BUT WE MAY SIMPLY HAVE TO DO WITHOUT LEBANESE COOPERATION WHILE WE SOFTEN UP THE REST OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. THE MNF'S DETERRENT ROLE SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. SERIOUS DISORDER HERE IS A REAL POSSIBILITY. PERHAPS AMERICA WILL ACCEPT THE MNF CONTINUING HERE IF THE ALTERNATIVE IS PARTITION OF LEBANON AND MORE MASSACRES. SUMMARY ENDS.

2. THE LEBANESE MAY NOT FAVOUR ANY OF THE FORMULAE IN TUR (BEIRUT TELNO 747 OF 1983). THEY RECOGNISE ONLY TOO CLEARLY THAT A UN PRESENCE, UNLIKE THE MNF, WOULD HAVE NO TEETH. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SUMMONED THE REPRESENTATIVES OF STATES CONTRIBUTING TO UNIFIL ON 6 JAN. CONTRARY TO THEIR EXPECTATION HE TOLD THEM THAT LEBANON DID NOT (REPEAT NOT) ENVISAGE THE REDEPLOYMENT OF UNIFIL ELSEWHERE THAN IN SOUTH LEBANON. BUT HE APPEARS NOT TO HAVE RAISED OBJECTIONS TO MORE OBSERVERS.

3. ON DETAIL, THE SWEDISH AMBASSADOR VOLUNTEERED TO ME THAT IF SWEDEN WAS ASKED TO MOVE THEIR CONTRIBUTION (A HOSPITAL) TO BEIRUT THEY WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO DO SO. BUT THEY WOULD BE RELUCTANT.

4. A UN FORCE IN BEIRUT WITH A MANDATE SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE MNF - IE SUPPORTING THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT - IS PROBABLY NOT ON, AS LONG AS THAT GOVERNMENT IS UNACCEPTABLE TO SYRIA. THE IDEA OF SUGGESTING A UN PRESENCE IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS IN THE FIRST INSTANCE IS ATTRACTIVE AS A DEVICE FOR INSERTING THE THIN END OF THE WEDGE PAST A SOVIET VETO. BUT IT WOULD GIVE THE UN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE REFUGEES WITHOUT THE POWER TO PROTECT THEM. HOW WOULD OBSERVERS ON THEIR OWN COPE WITH, SAXGN A PHALANGIST STYLE "INCIDENT" IN THE CAMPS - A PROBABLE EVENTUALITY? IN ANY CASE THE ITALIANS MAY CLING TO THEIR ROLE IN THE CAMPS UNLESS OR UNTIL THEY CAN WITHDRAW ALTOGETHER (MY TELNOS 2 AND 4 AND ROME TELNO 6). THE LAF MAY THEMSELVES OPPOSE A UN FLAG: THEY ARE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL OF THE CAMPS FOR HOUSING ARMS AND DISSIDENTS. THERE HAVE BEEN TWO INCIDENTS RECENTLY OF ROUGH LAF SEARCHES AND ARRESTS THERE.

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/S. PSP

5. PSP WOULD BE MOST UNLIKELY AT PRESENT TO AGREE TO UN GUARDING OF CEASEFIRE TALKS (PARA 1A OF TUR). OTHER PARTICIPANTS TOO MIGHT HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT DEPENDABILITY OF UN GUARDS IN A CRISIS. I AGREE WITH YOUR COMMENT ON 3C (UN TO REPLACE MNF IN PASE 2 OF SECURITY PLAN BUT I DOUBT WHETHER TRIPOLI IS YET ON. AND WHAT ABOUT THE REFUGEES IN BAALBECK?) WHEN THE TIME COMES TO TALK TO THE LEBANESE THEY WILL NOT EASILY BE ABLE TO REJECT THE PRINCIPLE OF UN INVOLVEMENT WITH PHASE 2: WE COULD THEN PRESS THEM TO CONSIDER OTHER UN ROLES. BUT WE MAY SIMPLY HAVE TO DO WITHOUT LEBANESE AGREEMENT UNTIL WE HAVE GOT THE REST OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOFTENED UP.

6. MORE GENERALLY, I SUBMIT THAT IN PURSUING UN IDEAS WE SHOULD BE WARY OF UNDERESTIMATING THE DETERRENT VALUE OF THE MNF (WHICH A UN FORCE WOULD NOT HAVE) OR THE UPHEAVAL THAT PREMATURE MNF WITHDRAWAL COULD CAUSE. THE MNF IS TAKING CASUALTIES REGULARLY WITHOUT ANY SPECTACULAR ACHIEVEMENTS TO ITS CREDIT AND IT IS EASY TO BE SCORNFUL OF THE FRENCH WITHDRAWAL TO THE CHRISTIAN SECTOR AND THE INCREASINGLY ELABORATE US DEFENCES AT THE AIRPORT. BUT THE ENEMIES OF STABILITY HERE KNOW THAT THE AMERICANS ARE, IN AN EMERGENCY, CAPABLE OF REINFORCING THE LAF WITH TANKS AND INFANTRY, TO SAY NOTHING OF THEIR AIR POWER AND CAPACITY FOR INTERVENTION WITH NAVAL GUNFIRE. THIS KNOWLEDGE MUST (MUST) HAVE A DETERRENT EFFECT ON THOSE WHO WOULD OTHERWISE BE READY TO SLOG IT OUT WITH THE ARMY IN THE STREETS. GEMAYEL'S INSISTENT ANXIETY TO KEEP THE MNF HERE SHOWS THAT HE AT LEAST HAS NO ILLUSIONS.

7. THE CONTINUING INFILTRATION OF ARMS AND DISSIDENTS INTO THE SOUTHERN SUBURBS POSES A VERY GRAVE THREAT TO LAW AND ORDER IF GEMAYEL'S PLANS FOR SECURITY AND GENEVA II BOG DOWN. INDEED MANY HERE ARE SCEPTICAL OF THESE PLANS AND BELIEVE THAT SECURITY MAY BREAK DOWN IN WEST BEIRUT SOON IN ANY CASE. MY CONTACT GROUP OF BRITISH NATIONALS TOLD ME IN DECEMBER THAT THE SITUATION WAS AS GLOOMY AS THEY HAD EVER KNOWN: THEIR CONSENSUS ON 3 JANUARY WAS THAT IT WAS EVEN WORSE. PALMER'S TELELETTER OF 9 JANUARY TO NENAD (WHICH I HAVE HAD REPEATED TO JEDDA, RIYADH AND DAMASCUS) DESCRIBES HOW A FUNDAMENTALIST TAKEOVER IN THE HEART OF THIS CITY IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE.

2.
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8. SENATOR TOWER HAS JUST BEEN HERE ON A FACT-FINDING MISSION. HE TOLD COMMANDER BRITFOPLEB, WHO WAS INVITED SPECIALLY TO MEET HIM (SEPARATE REPORT TO MODUK) THAT HE NOW REALISED THAT THERE WAS MUCH MISINFORMATION IN THE US ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE MARINES HERE. MY US COLLEAGUE IS OPTIMISTIC THAT HE WILL INTERVENE HELPFULLY IN CONGRESS. PERHAPS THE ADMINISTRATION MAY YET CONVINCCE CONGRESS, OR THE PRESIDENT MAY HIMSELF CONCLUDE, THAT THE CONSEQUENCES OF WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE WORSE THAN THOSE OF SOLDIERING ON. THE MOST RECENT US CASUALTY KFS HEADING NOT FOR THE AIRPORT BUT TO DILL SANDBAGS AT THE EMBASSY (WHICH THE AMERICANS CAN HARDLY WITHDRAW). LAST TIME THE AMERICANS WITHDREW THE MARINES, THEY GOT PART OF THE -BLAME FOR SABRA AND SHATILA. NEXT TIME THEY MAY FEAR THAT MORE AND WORSE MASSACRES, FLOWING FROM THE DISORDERLY PARTITION OF LEBANON, MAY BE AT STAKE.

MIERS

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING ST]

MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)

LIMITED

NENAD

MED

DEFENCE DEPT

PUSD

NEWS DEPT

UND

NAD

WED

SED

ECD(E)

FINANCE DEPT

PROTOCOL DEPT

PS

PS/LADY YOUNG

PS/MR LUCE

PS/PUS

SIR J BULLARD

SIR J LEAHY

MR WRIGHT

MR CARTLEDGE

MR MACINNES

MR ADAMS

MR EGERTON

MR JENKINS

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