

GRS 542

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FM MOSCOW 101036Z JAN 84

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 026 OF 10 JAN

INFO IMMEDIATE RIYADH (FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTY)  
INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK, WASHINGTON, PARIS, ROME, BEIRUT,  
TEL AVIV, DAMASCUS, CAIRO, THE HAGUE:  
INFO ROUTINE HELSINKI, SUVA, OSLO, DUBLIN, ACCRA, DUBAI, STOCKHOLM

YOUR TEL NO 11 TO UKMIS NEW YORK :

LEBANON, UN FORCES, AND THE SOVIET UNION.

1. THE RUSSIANS WANT THE AMERICANS OUT OF LEBANON. BUT, MORE THAN THAT, THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE MNF, AND THE US MARINES IN PARTICULAR, RETREAT WITH DISHONOUR FROM BEIRUT, EXPELLED BY THE FORCE OF DOMESTIC PUBLIC OPINION. SO LONG AS THEY THINK THAT THIS IS A POSSIBILITY, I DO NOT SEE THE RUSSIANS LIFTING A FINGER, IN ELECTION YEAR, TO PULL REAGAN'S CHESTNUTS OUT OF THE FIRE.
2. ABOUT LEBANON, OR ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST GENERALLY, THE RUSSIANS WILL NOT BE MORE 'RESPONSIBLE' UNTIL THERE IS SOME INDUCEMENT FOR THEM TO BECOME SO. AT PRESENT, THERE IS NOTHING WHICH OUTWEIGHS THE ATTRACTIONS OF WATCHING THE AMERICANS SINK DEEPER INTO THE LEBANON QUAGMIRE. ADMITTEDLY, THERE ARE DANGERS FOR THE SOVIET UNION IN THIS POLICY. IT HANDS THE INITIATIVE TO THE AMERICANS AND THEIR ALLIES. IT CREATES THE IMPRESSION IN ARAB CIRCLES THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS AN IMPOTENT BYSTANDER. IT TENDS TO MAKE THE SOVIET DOG BEHOLDEN TO THE SYRIAN TAIL. BUT, AT A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP HERE, THE RUSSIANS ARE NOT YET READY FOR A BOLDER ROLE. THEIR PRESENT POLICY IS PART OF A LONG-TERM STRATEGIC ASSUMPTION THAT THE US/ISRAEL ALLIANCE WILL EVENTUALLY ALIENATE THE ARAB WORLD TO SOVIET ADVANTAGE: AND COINCIDES WITH THEIR DETERMINATION TO AVOID A DIRECT CONFRONTATION IN THE REGION WITH THE US.
3. IN THE ABOVE, THE RUSSIANS ARE IN SOME DEGREE MAKING A VIRTUE OF NECESSITY. WHAT RILES THEM THE MOST IS THAT THEY ARE SHUT OUT OF THE MAIN MIDDLE EAST ACTION BY WASHINGTON, WHO REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT THE RUSSIANS CONSIDER TO BE THEIR LEGITIMATE INTERESTS IN THE REGION. IN HIS TELEGRAMS NO 9 AND 16, MR LUCAS HAS SPELLED OUT THE LIKELY SYRIAN PRICE FOR GOING ALONG WITH THE IDEAS IN YOUR TUP. THE SOVIET PRICE WOULD BE, ADDITIONALLY, TO BE PLAYED BACK INTO THE MIDDLE EAST GAME, PREFERABLY, THOUGH NOT EXCLUSIVELY, THROUGH THEIR FAVOURITE HOBBY-HORSE, AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT AT WHICH THE SOVIET UNION WOULD BE PRESENT. BUT I ASSUME THAT THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT THE AMERICANS WILL NOT AGREE TO. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I JUDGE THE LIKELIHOOD REMOTE OF GETTING OVER THE SOVIET ROADBLOCK.

CONFIDENTIAL

/4

# CONFIDENTIAL

4. MEANWHILE, THE ENGLISH SERVICE OF TASS HAS REPORTED YOUR MIDDLE EAST TOUR AND THE EXPECTATION THAT YOU "WILL TOUCH UPON THE IDEA OF REPLACING THE +MULTINATIONAL FORCE+ WITH U.N. PEACE-KEEPING UNITS."

THE REPORT CONCLUDES: "IT IS NOT FORTUITOUS THAT SUCH AN INITIATIVE HAS BEEN MADE. IT HAS BEEN PROMPTED BY PUBLIC DEMANDS IN BRITAIN AND ELSEWHERE TO WITHDRAW THE +MULTINATIONAL FORCE+ FROM LEBANON SINCE ITS PRESENCE THERE IS ONLY FACILITATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF U.S.-ISRAELI PLANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST."

SUTHERLAND

## MIDDLE EAST

### STANDARD DISTRIBUTION

NENAD	SEC D
MED	MAED
NAD	ES & SD
SAD	ERD
UND	ESID
EED	CONS D
SOV D	CONS EM UNIT
ECD	MR EGERTON
WED	MR THOMAS
RID	CABINET OFFICE

### ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE

# CONFIDENTIAL