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FM BEIRUT 131200Z JAN 84
TO IMMEDIATE F.C.O.
TELEGRAM NUMBER 34 OF 18 JANUARY 1984
INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK

PRIORITY WASHINGTON, PARIS, ROME, DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV,
JEDDA, CAIRO, AMMAN, TEHRAN

MY TELNO 22 (NOT TO ALL): SECURITY SITUATION IN BEIRUT.

1. THE PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT (AUB) WAS ASSASSINATED THIS MORNING ON THE CAMPUS BY GUNMEN WITH SILENCED WEAPONS. THIS FOLLOWS SIMILAR ATTACKS IN THE LAST TEN DAYS ON THE FRENCH CONSUL'S CHAUFFEUR (PRESUMED TO BE IN MISTAKE FOR THE FRENCH CONSUL HIMSELF), THE WIFE OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE FRENCH CULTURAL CENTRE, AND AN EGYPTIAN DIPLOMAT DRIVING A CAR WITH DIPLOMATIC PLATES ALLOCATED TO THE FRENCH EMBASSY. YESTERDAY THE SAUDI CONSUL WAS KIDNAPPED. IT IS WIDELY ASSUMED THAT ALL THESE ACTIONS WERE THE WORK OF ONE OR MORE OF THE SHIA EXTREMIST GROUPS NOT (NOT) UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE AMAL LEADER BERRI.

2. THERE SEEMS ALSO TO HAVE BEEN A SYSTEMATIC PATTERN OF ATTACKS ON FRENCH MNF POSITIONS IN RECENT DAYS: THESE HAVE TAKEN THE FORM OF HIT AND RUN ATTACKS WITH SMALL ARMS OR RPGS. THE

~~THE FORM OF HIT AND RUN ATTACKS WITH SMALL ARMS OR RPGS.~~ THE
FRENCH HAVE BEEN PUTTING MUCH PRESSURE ON THE LEBANESE ARMY
TO EXERCISE MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER THE APPROACHES TO FRENCH
POSITIONS.

3. THE ABOVE ATTACKS ARE ONE ASPECT OF THE GENERALLY WORSENERD
SECURITY SITUATION IN WEST BEIRUT TO WHICH I REFERRED IN MY
TUR (PARA 7). ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE:

- A) THE ATTACKERS NOW SEEM TO BE GOING FOR "SOFT" TARGETS -
THOUGH THIS BY NO MEANS INDICATES THAT THEY ARE NO LONGER
CONSIDERING HOW TO ATTACK BETTER DEFENDED HIGHER PROFILE,
TARGETS.
- B) AT LEAST ONE OF THE ATTACKS ON FRENCH POSITIONS WAS NOT A
"HIT AND RUN" ONE. LAST FRIDAY'S ATTACK WAS IN THE
NEIGHBOURHOOD OF MY RESIDENCE AND MY PROTECTION TEAM WERE
ABLE TO OBSERVE AMAL GUNMEN ON THE STREETS FOR SEVERAL HOURS
AND UNTIL WELL AFTER NIGHTFALL. THEY EVINCED NO HOSTILITY
TOWARDS US. THEY MAY HAVE BEEN STANDING READY TO RESIST AN
ATTEMPT BY THE ARMY TO PURSUE THEM BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE
VICINITY OF THEIR ATTACK.
- C) IF THE EXTREMISTS ARE BENT ON DISRUPTING OR EVEN FORCING THE
CLOSURE OF THE AUB (AND TODAY'S MURDER IS MERELY THE LATEST
IN A SERIES OF LESSER INCIDENTS AT THE AUB OVER A CONSIDERABLE
PERIOD), THEN THIS COULD HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS IN VIEW
OF THE IMPORTANCE AND PRESTIGE OF THE AUB AND THE CHALLENGE
TO THE GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY WHICH THE AUB'S INABILITY TO
FUNCTION WOULD CONSTITUTE.

4. I AM IN THE CLOSEST TOUCH WITH THE BRITISH COUNCIL ABOUT
THE SECURITY IMPLICATIONS FOR THEM.

MIERS
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