

LIC 879/27

FDW G 46/27

PP BEIRUT

PP DAMASCUS

PP TEL AVIV

PP AMMAN

PP CAIRO

PP JEDDA

PP ROME

PP MOSCOW

GR 300

CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 262350Z JAN 84

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TELEGRAM NUMBER 307 OF 26 JANUARY

INFO PRIORITY BEIRUT, DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV, AMMAN, CAIRO, JEDDA,  
UKMIS NEW YORK, PARIS, ROME, MOSCOW.

LEBANON

1. THE ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN MAKING A MAJOR EFFORT, FOR THE TIMEBEING WITH SOME SUCCESS, TO DAMP DOWN CONGRESSIONAL WORRIES ABOUT THE MARINES' ROLE IN LEBANON. THE PRESIDENT AND RUMSFELD HAVE HAD SEPARATE MEETINGS THIS WEEK WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SHULTZ HAS BRIEFED THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND THE FULL SENATE.
2. IN HIS STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS ON 25 JANUARY PRESIDENT REAGAN CLAIMED THAT THE U.S. WAS MAKING PROGRESS IN LEBANON, THAT THERE WAS HOPE FOR A FREE AND INDEPENDENT AND SOVEREIGN LEBANON AND THAT THE U.S. MUST NOT BE DRIVEN FROM ITS OBJECTIVES BY STATE-SPONSORED TERRORISM.
3. WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN EMPHASISING THAT PUBLIC DISSSENT FROM ITS POLICY ENCOURAGES SYRIAN INTRANSIGENCE. CONGRESSIONAL ANXIETIES ARE WELL UNDERSTOOD, BUT IT WOULD PLAY INTO SYRIANS' HANDS AND RENDER AN AGREEMENT HARDER TO ACHIEVE FOR CONGRESS TO SEEK TO PUT A NEW TIME LIMIT ON THE MARINES' PRESENCE. THE ADMINISTRATION HAS ALSO BEEN POINTING OUT THAT PREMATURE WITHDRAWAL OF THE M.N.F. IN THE ABSENCE OF AN AGREEMENT AND ALTERNATIVE PEACE-KEEPING ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE LIABLE TO PRECIPITATE A BLOOD BATH. CONGRESSIONAL STAFFERS HAVE TOLD US THAT THERE IS SOME RELUCTANCE AMONG OPPONENTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S LEBANON POLICY TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THWARTING IT OR FOR AN ALTERNATIVE COURSE OF ACTION, SUCH AS WITHDRAWING THE MARINES, WHICH COULD LEAD TO WORSE CHAOS IN LEBANON.
4. THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY GEMAYEL'S COMPROMISE OFFER ON DRUZE ARMY PROMOTIONS WHICH WAS CONVEYED BY HARIRI TO KHADDAM AND JUMBLATT IN DAMASCUS TODAY. RUMSFELD WILL BE LEAVING FOR THE MIDDLE EAST TONIGHT.

WRIGHT

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