

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

6 February, 1984

Dear John,

Lebanon

For discussion at
8.30 meeting on Tuesday.
A.J.C. 6/2.

You will have seen the telegrams from Beirut (numbers 63-66) summarising recent military and political developments. The latest reports suggest a further deterioration in the security situation today, with the Lebanese Army engaged in attempts to prevent militias taking over areas of West Beirut, a curfew imposed, and the barricades going up again on the 'Green Line' dividing Muslim (West) and Christian (East) Beirut. Some stray rounds have hit BRITFORLEB's HQ at Hadath, resulting so far in only one minor casualty (on 5 February). There has also been heavy fighting today near the British Embassy in West Beirut, but staff there are safe so far.

You will also have seen the reports from Paris, Rome and Washington with some immediate reactions from other MNF contributors. The Foreign Secretary held an office meeting this morning to take stock, and there was a further exchange of views with our MNF partners at one of the regular meetings with MNF Embassies here this afternoon. I enclose a copy of the report of the meeting. The preliminary view of other contributors is, like our own, to take no immediate decisions on the future of the MNF but to see whether Gemayel has any success in his attempts to form a representative government in this new situation. He is unlikely to achieve this without public abandonment of the 17 May Israel/Lebanon agreement and other measures to show that genuine concessions to the Muslims and Druze are on offer. It remains to be seen whether Gemayel is ready to offer such concessions. If he is, that very fact will put him under threat from hotheads on his own side. But if he fails to form such a government, we may have to recognise that the MNF can no longer play a useful role: it will clearly be seen as supporting a faction, rather than a broad section of Lebanon opinion.

Further consultations with our MNF partners will clearly be needed and we would like to see them take place quickly. The US position remains a key factor. Murphy of the US State Department was intending to visit London today en route from Beirut to Washington, but was unfortunately delayed by events in Beirut. We are hoping to arrange for him to come here later this week. We are also considering the Italian proposal put to us at the meeting of MNF representatives today for a meeting at Ministerial level later this week.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Mottram (MOD). I shall be showing Sir Geoffrey a copy overnight.

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

John ever
(P F Ricketts) Peter Ricketts

CONFIDENTIAL

OUT TELEGRAM



Classification and Caveats
CONFIDENTIAL

Precedence/Deskby
IMMEDIATE

ZCZC
GRS
CLASS
CAVEATS
DESKBY
FM FCO
PRE/ADD
TEL NO

1 ZCZC
2 GRS
3 CONFIDENTIAL
4
5
6 FM FCO 061700Z FEB 84
7 TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON
8 TELEGRAM NUMBER
9 INFO IMMEDIATE PARIS, ROME, BEIRUT, UKMIS NEW YORK
10 INFO PRIORITY DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV, UKMIS NEW YORK, AMMAN, JEDDA,
11 CAIRO, MOSCOW
12 LEBANON
13 1. Egerton held a meeting this afternoon with representatives
14 of the US_Italian and French Embassies to review the situation
15 in the light of the deterioration ~~in the situation~~ over the
16 weekend. He said that Ministers were extremely worried by the
17 latest developments which left Gemayel and the Army dangerously
18 exposed with no constituency except the Maronites.
19 2. Egerton said that we did not think that the present was a
20 time for quick or early decisions by MNF governments. We should
21 wait to see if Gemayel could come up with a new team. The least
22 he must do was to recapture some of the middle ground,
23 especially to regain the confidence of Nabih Berri. In our view
24 the only way Gemayel could attract strong Muslims back into his
25 team was by public abandonment of the 17 May agreement. He had

///
//
/

NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword already
File number	Dept NENAD	Distribution MNF in Lebanon
Drafted by (Block capitals) P M NIXON		
Telephone number 233 6030		
Authorised for despatch <i>[Signature]</i>		
Comcen reference	Time of despatch	

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

Classification and Caveats
CONFIDENTIAL

Page
2

1 <<<<
2 already hinted at this in his speech of 5 February but not
3 clearly enough. He would need to take other measures to show
4 that genuine concessions to the Muslims and Druze were on offer.
5 Painful concessions were required without delay: they would have
6 to ~~be~~ broader than the 8 point plan, ~~of 5 February~~
7 3. Egerton went on to say that we should give Gemayel a little
8 more time to see if he could put together another government. ~~But~~
9 if he could not rebuild confidence in himself as a national,
10 rather than a factional leader, we believed that we were fast
11 approaching the point at which we would have to say that the
12 basis for the MNF's presence in Lebanon no longer existed. For
13 the British Government any Lebanese Government must be seen to
14 act as a national government and this meant that it must have ~~a~~
15 representative Muslim support at least from the Sunni and Shia.
16 Druze support was also desirable. Egerton asked representatives
17 to seek views from capitals especially on attitudes towards the
18 17 May agreement. Hooper ^(US) emphasising that he had no
19 instructions, said that he could hold out no hope that his
20 authority ^{ies} would agree to the public abandonment of the 17 May
21 agreement.
22 4. Turning to the security situation Egerton said that I had
23 conveyed in messages to my MNF colleagues last week clear
24 British views about any Lebanese operations to close the
25 Shweifat Gap. We had received a reply from one Foreign Minister
26 and would be grateful for early views from the other two. We
27 assumed that sporadic fighting would continue in Beirut until
28 Gemayel's efforts to form a more broadly based government
29 succeeded or failed. The fate of the security plan was unclear.
30 Saudi statements suggested that they had given up trying to
31 coax the plan into life. ^{Did} ~~But~~ our partners have ~~no~~ information
32 on this or on any new moves which the Saudis might be
33 contemplating such as a conference between Saudi Arabia, Syria,
34 the Lebanese Government and the opposition parties. [?]

NNNN ends
telegram

BLANK

Catchword
5.

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

Classification and Caveats
CONFIDENTIAL

Page
3

1 <<<<

2 5. Hooper reported that the Syrian Foreign Minister had told
3 the US Assistant Secretary of State, Murphy, on 31 January that
4 Syria still supported the security plan. Khaddam had outlined
5 a sequence of 8 steps which would meet Syrian concerns:

6 (1) Gemayel states that he will not implement the 17 May
7 agreement.

8 (2) Geneva II decides in principle to abrogate the 17 May
9 agreement.

10 (3) Geneva II accepts the internal reforms already drawn up by
11 subcommittees.

12 (4) Formation of a government of national unity.

13 (5) The new government abrogates the 17 May agreement

14 (6) The new government implements internal reforms.

15 (7) The US implements the Habib plan of June 1982 for Israeli
16 withdrawal.

17 (8) The new Lebanese Government secures southern Lebanon,
18 Israeli troops withdraw, Syrian troops withdraw.

19
20 6. Discussing the prospects for further Israeli withdrawal,
21 Egerton said that this might help Gemayel by diverting attention
22 from the Beirut area and encourage^{ing} the Syrians into cooperating
23 with him. If the Lebanese Armed Forces were^{un-}able to replace the
24 departing Israelis in eg Sidon did our MNF partners think that
25 Gemayel could be persuaded to seek a role there for UNIFIL?
26 It seemed to us that SCR 425 already allowed for this and that
27 a request from the President of Lebanon for UNIFIL's deployment
28 would be sufficient.

29 ~~Hooper~~ Hooper noted that the US did not wish to take a leading
30 part in canvassing a wider UN role. Egerton asked for
31 clarification ^{whether the US} would agree to joint or several approaches to the
32 Lebanese. ~~Egerton~~ Egerton noted that the Syrians had called a meeting
33 of the National Salvation Front in Damascus today. It was clear
34 that they were paying close attention to developments in Lebanon.

NNNN ends
telegram

BLANK

Catchword
We

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

Classification and Caveats

CONFIDENTIAL

Page

4

1 <<<<

2 We wondered whether they were becoming worried by the prolonged
 3 fighting in Beirut. Was there any indication that they saw the
 4 apparent deterioration of the fighting into uncontrolled chaos
 5 as being against the interests of all, *including their own long term*
 6 *interests.* Egerton said that in the light of observations on our paper
 7 on UN options we were now working on a further paper setting out
 8 the next steps. It was important to set down a logical
 9 diplomatic approach as something to aim for in the present
 10 confused situation. ~~We would circulate our paper within ten~~
 11 ~~days.~~

12 9. Vattani (Italy) on instructions said that the MNF partners
 13 had to do something before long. He had therefore been asked
 14 by Bottai to propose a meeting at ministerial level as soon as
 15 possible. A political statement by the 4 could help ease
 16 tensions as it had done following the meeting in Paris in
 17 October. Andreotti would be available later this week. If a
 18 ministerial meeting was not possible there should be a meeting
 19 of political directors. Failing that the London contact group
 20 should meet as often as possible. Egerton said that we would
 21 give the proposal urgent and sympathetic consideration. Hooper
 22 commented that Murphy tentatively planned to visit European
 23 MNF capitals later in the week. It was agreed that the contact
 24 group would meet on 13 February if a ministerial meeting later
 25 in the week was arranged: otherwise a further meeting would be
 26 held on 9 February.

28 HOWE

29 NNNN

31

32

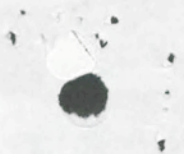
33

34

NNNN ends
telegram

BLANK

Catchword



1

11 12 1
2 3 4
5 6 7 8
9 10 11 12

1984