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FM DAMASCUS 131015Z FEB 84

*Mu Gles*

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 83 OF 13 FEBRUARY

AND TO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON AND BEIRUT

INFO ROUTINE TEL AVIV, JEDDA, PARIS, ROME, MOSCOW, MODOKI, ADEN  
AND TRIPOLI

LEBANON

1. LEADING SYRIAN FIGURES, INCLUDING THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE, HAVE TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY IN RECENT PRESS CONFERENCES TO REITERATE SYRIA'S WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER A WIDER ROLE FOR THE UN IN BEIRUT BUT ONLY ON CONDITION (FOLLOWING TWO WORDS UNDERLINED) THAT IT IS ACCOMPANIED BY THE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF THE MNF BOTH ON AND OFF SHORE. THERE HAS BEEN NO (REPEAT NO) MENTION IN THE SYRIAN PRESS OF THE BRITISH PROPOSALS FOR A WIDER UN ROLE OR OF ANY VISIT TO THE REGION OF A SENIOR UN OFFICIAL. (UKMIS NEW YORK TELNO 147, PARA 4).

2. SINCE THE NEWS OF PRESIDENT ANDROPOV'S DEATH BROKE THE SYRIAN PRESS HAVE MADE NO MENTION OF THE PROPOSED VISIT TO DAMASCUS BY ALIEV (MOSCOW TELNO 164) AND WE ASSUME THAT IT HAS BEEN POSTPONED OR CANCELLED.

THERE WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGH LEVEL SYRIA/SOVIET DISCUSSIONS ON LEBANON IN THE MARGINS OF ANDROPOV'S FUNERAL: THE SYRIAN DELEGATION WILL BE LED BY ABDULLAH AL AHMAR, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE BA'ATH PARTY, AND WILL INCLUDE THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

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3. MEANWHILE THE FLOW OF VISITORS HAS BEEN MAINTAINED BY THE ARRIVAL OF THE SOUTH YEMEN PRESIDENT, ALI NASSER MOHAMMED ON 12 FEBRUARY AND THE LIBYAN NO 2, MAJOR JALLOUD, THE PREVIOUS DAY. THERE HAS BEEN NO SUGGESTION TO DATE OF JOINT SYRIAN-LIBYAN-SOUTH YEMEN TALKS BUT THE CLEAR IMPLICATION OF THE VISIT IS THAT THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED WISH TO BE SEEN TO BE REFORGING THE IMAGE OF THE STEADFASTNESS FRONT WHICH HAS BEEN SCARELY MENTIONED IN THE PAST YEAR. THESE MOVES, THOUGH SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO THE LEBANESE CRISIS, ARE ALSO INTENDED TO MATCH THE GROWTH OF THE EGYPT/JORDAN/IRAQ/PLO AXIS. KHADDAM'S VISIT TO ALGIERS (28/29 JANUARY) COULD BE VIEWED IN THE SAME CONTEXT.

LUCAS

BT

MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)  
LIMITED PS  
NENAD PS/LADY YOUNG  
MED PS/MR LUCE  
DEFENCE DEPT PS/PUS  
FUSD SIR J BULLARD  
NEWS DEPT SIR J LEAHY  
UND SIR W HARDING  
NAD MR WRIGHT  
WED MR CARTLEDGE  
SED MR MACINNES  
ECD(E) MR ADAMS  
FINANCE DEPT MR JENKINS  
PROTOCOL DEPT MR EGERTON  
PLANNING STAFF  
NED

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SIR R ARMSTRONG)OFFICE

SIR P MOORE  
BUCKINGHAM PALACE

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