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DESKBY 181000Z FCO

FM BEIRUT 180740Z JUN 82

TO IMMEDIATE F.C.O.

TELEGRAM NUMBER 305 OF 18 JUNE 1982

INFO IMMEDIATE DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV, AMMAN, CAIRO, WASHINGTON,
UKMIS NEW YORK
SAVING TO OTHER MIDDLE EAST POSTS.

MY TELNO 302 OF 17 JUNE: LEBANON/ISRAEL.

1. NOT SURPRISINGLY EVERY LEBANESE OF IMPORTANCE WHOM I NOW SEE (A) PRAISES THE STAND TAKEN BY THE UNITED KINGDOM IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND (B) BEGS US TO HELP THE LEBANON. SOME GO SO FAR AS ACTUALLY SUGGESTING WAYS IN WHICH WE MIGHT HELP. THERE SEEM AT FIRST SIGHT TO BE THREE THINGS WHICH WE COULD DO, ALL OF WHICH HAVE BEEN MENTIONED IN PREVIOUS TELEGRAMS.
2. FIRST, WE COULD CONVEY TO THE PALESTINIANS THAT THEY WOULD BE WELL-ADVISED TO COME TO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND THE LEBANESE ARMY. ANY OTHER PATH LEADS THEM TO GENERAL SHARON AND A BASHIR GEMAYEL. I CANNOT DO IT HERE SINCE THE PALESTINIAN LEADERS ARE INACCESSIBLE. MOREOVER A VISIT BY ME TO ARAFAT WOULD NO DOUBT CAUSE EXPLOSIONS IN ISRAEL. PERHAPS THE BEST METHOD WOULD BE SIMULTANEOUS APPROACHES IN LONDON AND, SUBJECT TO THE VIEWUAF OF THE POSTS CONCERNED, DAMASCUS AND NEW YORK.
3. SECONDLY WE COULD SURELY AS A COUNTER-PART GET THE AMERICANS TO EXPLAIN TO THE ISRAELIS THAT IT IS NOT IN THEIR INTERESTS TO EXTERMINATE ARAFAT AND HIS COMMAND IN BEIRUT. INDEED IT WOULD BE FAR CLEVERER TO LET THEM OUT. IF THIS DOES NOT HAPPEN THERE WILL BE AN EXTREMIST PLO COMMAND IN DAMASCUS OR SOME OTHER CONVENIENT CAPITAL AND TERRORISM ON A VAST SCALE.
4. THIRDLY, IF A MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE, OR FOR THAT MATTER A STRONG UNITED NATIONS FORCE, IS ESTABLISHED, WE MIGHT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE. I REALISE THAT THIS IS A TALL ORDER AFTER THE FALKLANDS BUT THERE ARE STRONG POLITICAL REASONS FOR IT. MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE IT WOULD DEMONSTRATE OUR DETERMINATION TO ENSURE LEBANESE INDEPENDENCE.
5. YOU WILL HAVE SEEN FROM MY TEL. NO. 298 OF 17 JUNE THAT THE LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER COUNTS ON OUR PARTICIPATION. SAEB SALAH, WHO I THINK IS LIKELY TO BE THE NEXT LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER, DID NOT SPECIFICALLY REFER TO A MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE. HE DID HOWEVER BEG US TO HELP THE LEBANON, NOW THAT WE HAD BRILLIANTLY DISPOSED OF THE CRISIS IN THE FALKLANDS. HE SPECIFICALLY URGED US TO TAKE THE ACTION I HAVE ADVOCATED IN PARAGRAPH 3 ABOVE. IN THIS, THE WORST EMERGENCY THAT THE LEBANON HAS EVER FACED SINCE INDEPENDENCE, RELIABLE AND IMPORTANT FRIENDS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM ARE DEFINITELY LOOKING TO US. EVEN THE AMERICANS, ALTHOUGH VILIFIED ON ALL HANDS, ARE SEEN TO BE DOING SOMETHING THROUGH HABIB WHILE THE FRENCH ARE PLAYING A CONSPICUOUS PART.

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6. I AM MAKING SURE THAT BOTH OUR ACTION IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND OUR AID TO THE LEBANESE RED CROSS ARE BECOMING WELL KNOWN HERE. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND ACTION ON THE THREE LINES INDICATED ABOVE; HOWEVER, NOT SO MUCH IN THE INTEREST OF OUR IMAGE HERE (ALTHOUGH THAT IS NOT WITHOUT IMPORTANCE) BUT IN THE INTEREST OF ESTABLISHING A STRONGER AND MORE STABLE LEBANESE STATE. WE MUST SURELY RECOGNIZE HOW MUCH THAT IS IN OUR INTEREST AND HOW MUCH FAILURE IN THE PAST TO ESTABLISH IT HAS COST.

7. FCO PLEASE PASS TO ALL SAVING ADDRESSEES.

ROBERTS

REPEATED AS REQUESTED

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