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cc

Lebanon (sitn)  
Overseas Aid (Lomé)  
Vietnam Refugees  
Sport (S. Africa)

NOTE OF A DISCUSSION AT NO. 10 DOWNING STREET ON WEDNESDAY, 5  
SEPTEMBER 1979 AT 1445

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PRESENT

Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary  
Mr. M. D. M. Franklin  
Mr. M. O'D. B. Alexander

Mr. M. O'Kennedy (Minister for  
Foreign Affairs)

Mr. A. O'Rourke (Secretary,  
Department of Foreign  
Affairs)

The Middle East

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that he thought the French might be proposing an initiative by the Nine on the situation in the Lebanon. He was inclined to agree that an initiative was required. If no one took action, the situation could only continue to deteriorate.

Mr. O'Kennedy agreed. The presence of an Irish contingent in Southern Lebanon meant that the situation was a source of particular concern to the Irish Government. Irish troops were being fired on: if an Irish soldier was killed pressure on the Irish to withdraw, which was not at present serious, would undoubtedly intensify. The Irish Prime Minister had an assurance from the Israelis that they would not fire on the Irish contingent but the fact was that the Israelis were active in the ~~border~~ zone. The Israelis claimed to support the UN mandate but the mandate was not working. Israeli support for the mandate seemed to be on a basis that was inconsistent with its continuance.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary asked about the views of the Irish Government on self-determination for the Palestinians. Mr. O'Kennedy said that his Government had always been content to rest on the position elaborated by the Nine. They recognised both the rights of the Palestinian people and the right of Israel to exist. They had never committed themselves to self-determination for the Palestinians. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that it was becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the realities of the situation. Unfortunately, acceptance of self-determination was inconsistent with the Camp David Agreement and

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would make life difficult for both the US and Egyptian Governments. Mr. O'Kennedy commented that Camp David no longer looked like a step towards the solution of the Middle East problem. He agreed with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary that the Nine might be able to establish a common position on the problem in Southern Lebanon but that a common position on self-determination for the Palestinians was not at present feasible.

#### The Lome Agreement

Mr. O'Rourke said that the Lome Agreement might give rise to problems at the next Foreign Affairs Council. The Presidency had just received a letter from (Mr. O'Rourke thought) Mr. Adams of Barbados asking that some of the agreed texts should be re-opened. Mr. O'Kennedy said that his position was that there was no scope for further negotiation with the ACP countries. The most he would be prepared to envisage would be, perhaps, some discussion of the interpretation of the texts. Unfortunately, the Caribbean members of the ACP, who had now inherited the Presidency of the Group, had much less interest than the Africans in seeing the fund become operative. Mr. Franklin said that it would be wrong to show flexibility and that to do so would not lessen the strains emerging among the ACP countries.

#### Portugal

Mr. O'Kennedy said that one of the issues the Irish Presidency hoped to resolve at the Foreign Affairs Council on 18 September was the outstanding negotiation with Portugal over imports of automobiles. The political situation in Portugal was very delicate and further delay would not be helpful.

#### Vietnamese Refugees

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that he understood that the Danish and Dutch Governments wanted to re-open the discussions about food aid for Vietnamese refugees. He was opposed to this until Waldheim's report on the refugees was available. Mr. O'Kennedy agreed and said that this was the position of the Community.

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On a different aspect of the Vietnamese refugee problem, Mr. O'Kennedy referred to the fact that his Government had recently offered to accept a batch of refugees from Hong Kong but only about half of the agreed number had arrived. The remainder had refused to come, evidently preferring to go to the United States. If it became apparent that this incident was part of a trend, the whole problem of refugee resettlement might become more complex. It would be difficult for countries like Ireland to play a role if the refugees insisted on going elsewhere.

#### Cambodia

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that the situation in Cambodia was much worse than that in Vietnam, Mr. O'Kennedy agreed and regretted the absence of a position of the Nine. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that as he understood it the Red Cross were now distributing food in Cambodia: this appeared to create the possibility that the Nine could be more generous.

Mr. O'Kennedy said that he was aware of nothing that need inhibit the Nine from doing so. In fact he believed that M. Cheysson had succeeded in maintaining a food aid programme to Cambodia despite the absence of a Ministerial decision on the subject. The Nine would be free to increase the programme if they chose to do so. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that he thought it would be much better to do it in Cambodia than in Vietnam.

#### South African Rugby Tour

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and Mr. O'Kennedy agreed that the decision reached by the various Rugby Union Federations to invite the South Africans to tour the British Isles next month was very regrettable. After the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary had explained the difficulties facing HMG, Mr. O'Kennedy said that, if necessary, his Government would probably step in to prevent the tour taking place. But he expected the Irish Rugby Union Federation would in fact accept the view of the Irish Government and withdraw the invitation.

/Rhodesia and Namibia

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Rhodesia and Namibia

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary briefed Mr. O'Kennedy on the present state of play on both these problems.

The meeting broke up at 1530.

*Ans*

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