

OPS cc MASTER

SUBJECT: LEBANON: Internal Situation Pt 4



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

4 November 1983

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T175/83

Dear Ron,

Thank you for your message of 24 October. I entirely agree that we cannot let the outrageous attacks on the Multi-National Force deflect us from our task. We must continue our efforts to enable the legitimate Government of Lebanon to pursue a peaceful solution in the reconciliation talks.

You will have had an account of the meeting which George Shultz and Geoffrey Howe attended in Paris on 27 October. I was somewhat relieved to note that George Shultz made it clear that there would be no hasty reaction on your part by way of retaliation for the attacks on your Marines. I know you will think twice and three times before doing anything which could damage the process of reconciliation and put in further danger the contingents in the MNF.

As agreed at the Paris meeting, we are putting what pressure we can on all the participants in the Geneva talks. If a more broadly based Lebanese Government can be constructed, that will be a major step forward.

As Geoffrey Howe also mentioned, we have been giving some thought to the longer term. I think we should try to agree urgently on a common approach among the Four on the future of the MNF.

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We share a number of common objectives, for example, withdrawal of all foreign forces and the creation of conditions in which the MNF can itself withdraw. At the Paris meeting it was agreed that the four Foreign Ministers should look at this again in the margins of the NATO Ministerial meeting in December. But I believe that it would be worth getting US and British officials together before then to work on a common approach. There are no easy answers, but the ceasefire and the Geneva Conference represent hard won achievements, and we must work out together how to build on them.

News of further senseless bloodshed in Lebanon today only underlines the urgency of achieving a solution.

*Y
Cousins
Ragans*

The President of the United States of America

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