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DESKBY 140900Z

FROM UKMIS NEW YORK 140043Z JAN 83

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 23 DATED 13 JANUARY 83

INFO PRIORITY BEIRUT, TEL AVIV, WASHINGTON, DAMASCUS, THE HAGUE,  
ROUTINE UKMIS GENEVA, TUNIS, AMMAN, PARIS, ROME, OSLO, DUBLIN,  
MOSCOW, SUVA

MY 2IPTS: UNIFIL: ISRAEL/LEBANON

1. URQUHART SAID THAT ACCORDING TO DRAPER, WHOM HE HAD SEEN DURING HIS VISIT, THE ISRAELIS WERE RUNNING RINGS ROUND THE LEBANESE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. THEY HAD EARLIER PERSUADED GEMAYEL TO SEND AN OLD FRIEND OF THE FAMILY FOR SECRET NEGOTIATIONS (WITH SHARON). THIS NEGOTIATOR (WHOSE NAME URQUHART DOES NOT KNOW,) HAD BEEN ILL-INFORMED AND HAD SIGNED A DOCUMENT GIVING A GREAT DEAL AWAY. FOR EXAMPLE THE DOCUMENT HAD REFERRED TO UN FORCES REMAINING ON THE FRONTIER, BUT THE LEBANESE NEGOTIATOR HAD NOT REALISED THAT IN AGREEING TO THIS THE ISRAELIS WERE ONLY AGREEING TO THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF THE HANDFUL OF UNTSO OBSERVERS ALREADY THERE AND NOT TO UNIFIL AS HE HAD MISTAKENLY THOUGHT. DRAPER WAS HAVING TO PULL ALL THESE LEBANESE CHESTNUTS OUT OF THE FIRE. ISRAELI DEMANDS WERE SWEEPING. THEY WERE TRYING FOR FULL NORMALISATION: FOR A 45 KILOMETER SECURITY ZONE MEASURED FROM METULLAH; AND FOR AN EARLY WARNING STATION ON JEBEL BAROUK (NOT FAR FROM ZAHLE) WHICH GIVEN THE TOPOGRAPHY WOULD ENABLE THEM TO MONITOR AIR ACTIVITY AS FAR AS THE GULF. BOTH UNIFIL AND THE MNF WERE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE SECURITY ZONE WHICH WAS TO BE RUN IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE IDF (PRESUMABLY WITH THE HELP OF HADDAD).

2. MEANWHILE, THE ISRAELIS WERE EXPLOITING LEBANON ECONOMICALLY. BY MAKING HAIFA A FREE PORT, THEY WERE DRAINING CARGOES AWAY FROM THE PORT OF BEIRUT, THEREBY DEPRIVING THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT OF A VERY LARGE PART OF THEIR CUSTOM DUTIES WHICH WAS A MAIN ITEM IN THEIR INCOME. THEY WERE ALSO FLOODING LEBANESE MARKETS WITH CHEAP AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE.

3. URQUHART DESCRIBED GEMAYEL AS A NICE YOUNG MAN BUT SAID THAT HE HAD LITTLE GRIP ON THE SITUATION. IT WAS WAZZAN WHO KEPT THE NEGOTIATIONS ON TRACK. PEOPLE HAD NOT FOCUSED ON THE EXTENT OF ISRAELI DEMANDS PARTICULARLY OVER THE SECURITY ZONE. AS THINGS STOOD, IT LOOKED AS IF IT WOULD TAKE MONTHS TO GET THE ISRAELIS OUT. THERE WAS A SERIOUS RISK OF WAZZAN RESIGNING. IF HE DID THE WHOLE GOVERNMENT WOULD COLLAPSE AND IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO REPLACE IT. IT WAS ALSO QUESTIONABLE WHETHER GEMAYEL WOULD SURVIVE. THERE WERE NUMEROUS RUMOURS OF ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS.

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4. DRAPER HAD TOLD URQUHART THAT HE WAS TRYING TO PROMOTE THE IDEA THAT UNIFIL SHOULD GUARD THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMPS AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES. THIS WOULD HELP PERSUADE THE PLO TO LEAVE THE CAMPS WHICH THEY CURRENTLY OCCUPIED IN SYRIAN CONTROLLED NORTHERN LEBANON. URQUHART HAD SAID TO HIM THAT THIS WOULD HAVE TO APPLY TO THE SOUTHERN CAMPS AS WELL AS TO THE NORTHERN ONES. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WOULD OPPOSE THIS. IRONICALLY, THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES NOW TRUSTED THE IDF AND WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR LEAVING BECAUSE OF THEIR FEARS OF THE LEBANESE ARMY. URQUHART HAD ASKED CALLAGHAN TO MAKE A STUDY OF HOW MANY TROOPS UNIFIL WOULD NEED TO PROTECT ALL THE CAMPS.

5. I SOUNDED OUT URQUHART ON THE POSSIBILITY OF UNIFIL HELPING TO TRAIN THE LEBANESE ARMY. URQUHART THOUGHT THE PROBLEM WOULD BE THAT IT NEEDED ONE COUNTRY TO DO THE JOB IF THERE WAS NOT TO BE CONFUSION BECAUSE OF DIFFERING NATIONAL STANDARDS. BUT HE DID NOT RULE IT OUT. I ALSO PUT TO HIM ADMIRAL HOWE'S IDEA OF UNIFIL HELPING TO ESTABLISH "PILLARS OF SOLIDARITY" AT VARIOUS POINTS IN LEBANON (WASHINGTON TELNO 64, NOT TO ALL), URQUHART THOUGHT THAT THIS WAS A GOOD IDEA. HE NOTED HOW EFFECTIVE THE SMALL FORCE OF UN OBSERVERS IN BEIRUT WAS BEING IN PROVIDING LOCAL RE-ASSURANCE. I ASKED HIM WHETHER HE STILL THOUGHT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO INCREASE UNIFIL TO AROUND 20,000 (MY TELNO 4). HE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT 12,000 AT LEAST WOULD BE POSSIBLE.

THOMSON

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