

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES 16.

PS
PS/MR HURD
PS/PUS

~~MR MOBERLY~~
MR MOBERLY
~~MR BALLARD~~ MR. Goodison.

NO 10 DOWNING STREET
CABINET OFFICE D10

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ADVANCE COPY

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TEL NO 333 OF 04 AUG 82

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK

PRIORITY WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, AMMAN , CAIRO , DAMASCUS,
PARIS , JEDDA, JERUSALEM.

MY TELEGRAM NO 332: ISRAEL /LEBANON

1. I DISCUSSED THE LATEST FIGHTING IN BEIRUT BRIEFLY AT 0700Z THIS MORNING WITH THE MINISTER/COUNSELLOR AT THE US EMBASSY. BROWN HAD JUST SPOKEN TO THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER, WHO HAD TELEPHONED AFTER SHULTZ HAD WEIGHED IN HEAVILY WITH SHAMIR IN WASHINGTON AND BROWN HIMSELF HAD SPOKEN STERNLY TO THE ISRAELIS HERE.

2. BROWN SAID THAT THERE WAS A DIRECT CONFLICT OF EVIDENCE . BEGIN HAD ASSURED HIM THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD NO INTENTION TODAY OF TAKING WEST BEIRUT AND HAD SAID THAT ISRAEL WAS WILLING TO HAVE A CEASEFIRE ON THE USUAL CONDITIONS. HE HAD POINTED TO THE FACT THAT THE ISRAELI AIR FORCE HAD NOT BEEN IN ACTION , AND HAD ALSO DENIED THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE USING ARTILLERY (WHEREAS THE US

DENIED THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE USING ARTILLERY (WHEREAS THE US EMBASSY IN BEIRUT HAD REPORTED THAT A BATTERY NEARBY WAS PUMPING ROUNDS INTO WEST BEIRUT AT THE RATE OF 8 EVERY 30 SECONDS). THE ISRAELIS ADMITTED TO HAVING TAKEN TWO SMALL AREAS OF EMPTY GROUND IN WEST BEIRUT : ONE IN THE AREA OF THE AIRPORT , THE OTHER NEAR THE MUSEUM CROSSING IN THE VICINITY OF THE HIPPODROME. BROWN COMMENTED THAT THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF SMOKE AND CONFUSION IN BEIRUT.

3. BROWN'S TENTATIVE CONCLUSION WAS THAT THE LATEST ISRAELI ADVANCE REPRESENTED A FURTHER INTENSIFICATION OF PRESSURE ON THE PLO . BEGIN'S REITERATION OF THE CABINET FORMULA (FIRST USED ON 1 AUGUST) THAT THE ISRAELIS DID NOT "TODAY " INTEND TO ASSAULT WEST BEIRUT COULD NOT BE DISREGARDED. NEVERTHE LESS, IT WAS BY NO MEANS IMPOSSIBLE THAT SHARON MIGHT TRY TO EXPLOIT THE SITUATION , ARGUING THAT CONTINUING PLO FIRE , ISRAELI CASUALTIES ETC, MADE FURTHER ADVANCES NECESSARY.

4. WHAT IS HAPPENING IN BEIRUT IS ALSO CONSISTENT WITH THE THESIS THAT THE ISRAELIS MAY TAKE THOSE AREAS OF WEST BEIRUT IN WHICH THE PLO ARE CONCENTRATED SLICE BY SLICE AND THAT THERE WILL NO POINT AT WHICH WE CAN SEE THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE ABANDONED NEGOTIATIONS AND GONE FOR THE MILITARY OPTION-. IN EFFECT , THEY ALREADY SEEM TO BE PROCEEDING DOWN BOTH TRACKS IN PARALLEL , NO DOUBT CALCULATING THAT INCREASING MILITARY PRESSURE WILL CONCENTRATE PLO MINDS ON THE NEED TO WITHDRAW, AND THAT IF IT DOES NOT THE IDF WILL BE BETTER PLACED TO FORCE THEM OUT MILITARILY. I DOUBT WHETHER THE THREAT OF CHAPTER VII SANCTIONS WILL DETER THEM . EVEN IF THEY COULD NOT COUNT ON THE AMERICANS TO VETO , ACTION TO REASSURE THE AUTHORITY OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (UKMIS NEW YORK TEL NO 1212) WOULD BE JUST AS LIKELY TO SPUR THEM ON TO FINISH THE JOB IN BEIRUT QUICKLY. THE ISRAELIS ARE GREAT BELIEVERS IN FAITS ACCOMPLIS . AND ANYWAY HAVE NO GREAT REGARD FOR THE COUNCIL.

5. HENAD PLEASE DECIDE WHETHER TO REPEAT TO BEIRUT.

PRENDERGAST

BT