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FM WASHINGTON 042150Z

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 2660 OF 4 AUGUST 1982

INFO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK, TEL AVIV.

ROUTINE BEIRUT, DAMASCUS, AMMAN, CAIRO, JEDDA, TUNIS, PARIS.

YOUR TELNO 1461: LEBANON

1. AS AGREED WITH THE DEPARTMENT I HAVE NOT TAKEN ACTION ON THESE INSTRUCTIONS WHICH WERE LARGELY OVERTAKEN BY THE ISRAELI MOVE INTO WEST BEIRUT EARLIER TODAY.

2. IN A STATEMENT ISSUED AFTER A MEETING OF THE NSC THIS MORNING, PRESIDENT REAGAN NOTED THAT THE LATEST ISRAELI OFFENSIVE CAME ONLY A DAY AFTER HE HAD MADE CLEAR TO SHAMIR THAT THE US PLACED GREAT IMPORTANCE ON THE SUSTAINED MAINTENANCE OF A CEASEFIRE IN PLACE TO AVOID FURTHER CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AND TO SECURE THE PROMPT WITHDRAWAL OF PLO FORCES. THIS WAS A NECESSARY FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE GOAL OF RESTORING THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. THE STATEMENT CONTINUED QUOTE THROUGH GOVERNMENTS WHICH HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE PLO I HAVE EXPRESSED MY STRONG CONVICTION THAT THE PLO MUST NOT DELAY FURTHER ITS WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON. AT THE SAME TIME I HAVE EXPRESSED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF RE-ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A STRICT CEASEFIRE IN PLACE SO THAT THIS MATTER CAN BE PROMPTLY RESOLVED UNQUOTE. REAGAN SENT A MESSAGE ON THESE LINES TO BEGIN THIS MORNING.

3. THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE TOLD US THAT THE PRESIDENT IS MUCH ANNOYED BY THE ISRAELI ACTION SO SOON AFTER HIS MEETING WITH SHAMIR, AND UNDERLINED THE STRONG LANGUAGE OF THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO THE ISRAELIS. THEY SAID THAT THERE IS NO BASIS FOR PRESS REPORTS THAT THIS MORNING'S NSC MEETING DISCUSSED POSSIBLE SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL. BUT CLUVERIUS (PLEASE PROTECT) TOLD US THIS EVENING THAT HE AND FAIRBANKS WERE ABOUT TO BRIEF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE BEEN MISLED BY THE ISRAELIS OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS - QUOTE THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT BEGIN HAS BEEN LYING UNQUOTE. HE POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO PREPARE OPINION ON THE HILL FOR ANY DECISION TO TAKE MEASURES AGAINST ISRAEL.

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4. THE STATE DEPARTMENT ARE UNABLE TO CLARIFY WHAT IS MEANT BY QUOTE CEASEFIRE IN PLACE UNQUOTE, BUT SUGGEST THAT REAGAN INTENDED TO COUNTER THE ISRAELI PRACTICE OF ADVANCING THEIR POSITIONS UNDER COVER OF A CEASEFIRE. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ISRAELIS' PRESENT POSITIONS INSIDE WEST BEIRUT DO NOT SEEM TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

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