

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES 17

IMMEDIATE
ADVANCE COPY

Lebanon

PS
PS/MR HURD
PS/PUS
SIR J LEAHY
~~MR MOBERLY~~
SIR J BULLARD
HD/NENAD
HD/MED
HD/UND
HD/SEC DEPT
HD/...*NAD*...

~~NO 10 DOWNING STREET~~
CABINET OFFICE D10

HD/CONSULAR DEPT

... ..
... ..
PUSD (2)
NEWS D
RESIDENT CLERK

CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 080045Z SEP 82

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 2965 OF 8 SEPTEMBER

INFO PRIORITY BEIRUT DAMASCUS AMMAN JEDDA CAIRO TUNIS PARIS
MOSCOW UKMIS NEW YORK

LEBANON

1. VELIOTES ADMITTED TO LEAHY TODAY THAT THE AMERICANS WERE WORRIED AT THE POTENTIAL FOR ISRAELI/SYRIAN CLASHES IN THE BEKA'A. DRAPER WOULD THEREFORE RETURN TO LEBANON TOWARDS THE END OF THIS WEEK TO DISCUSS THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES: THIS WAS NOW THE TOP ITEM ON THE AGENDA. HABIB WOULD REMAIN INVOLVED THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY AS A FULL TIME NEGOTIATOR: HE PLANNED TO RETURN TO BEIRUT FOR BESHIR GEMAYEL'S INAUGURATION ON 23 SEPTEMBER.

2. ISRAELI INSISTENCE ON A PEACE-TREATY WITH LEBANON WAS NOT HELPFUL. THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD DRAFTED A PRESS STATEMENT APPROVING THE PRINCIPLE OF A PEACE TREATY PROVIDED THAT IT WAS FREELY NEGOTIATED, BUT POINTING OUT THAT THE FIRST PRIORITY IN LEBANON WAS THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES.

3. VELIOTES AGREED THAT BEIRUT HAD DONE WELL SINCE HIS ELECTION

2. ISRAELI INSISTENCE ON A PEACE-TREATY WITH LEBANON WAS NOT HELPFUL. THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD DRAFTED A PRESS STATEMENT APPROVING THE PRINCIPLE OF A PEACE TREATY PROVIDED THAT IT WAS FREELY NEGOTIATED, BUT POINTING OUT THAT THE FIRST PRIORITY IN LEBANON WAS THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES.

3. VELIOTES AGREED THAT BESHIR HAD DONE WELL SINCE HIS ELECTION, IN PARTICULAR IN KEEPING THE ISRAELIS AT A DISTANCE. THE ISRAELIS WERE EMPLOYING CLUMSY TACTICS - A PUBLIC EMBRACE AND INTENSE PRIVATE PRESSURE. IT WAS VITAL FOR THE ARABS TO HOLD OUT A HAND TO BESHIR TO COUNTER THIS. THE AMERICANS HAD SUGGESTED THAT THE SAUDIS SEND A FRIENDLY SIGNAL TO BESHIR BUT DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THEY HAD DONE SO.

4. MUCH WOULD DEPEND ON BESHIR'S ABILITY TO GAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF LEBANESE MUSLIMS. WALID JUMBLATT WAS IMPLACABLY HOSTILE BUT OTHERS SEEMED WILLING TO JUDGE BESHIR BY HIS ACTIONS. IMPROVED SECURITY IN WEST BEIRUT HAD ALREADY HELPED TO IMPROVE CONFIDENCE; SOME MUSLIMS WERE BEGINNING TO COOPERATE WITH THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES, FOR EXAMPLE IN SUPPLYING INFORMATION ABOUT THE MILITIAS' ARMS CACHES.

5. VELIOTES CONFIRMED THAT CONGRESS WOULD NOT APPROVE US PARTICIPATION IN A MULTINATIONAL FORCE. UNIFIL WAS THEREFORE THE ONLY FEASIBLE BUFFER-FORCE. HE WAS RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT THAT THERE MIGHT BE A PROBLEM IN FINDING A ROLE FOR UNIFIL TO PLAY TO KEEP IT IN BEING PENDING AN AGREEMENT ON ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND ARGUED THAT UNIFIL TROOP-CONTRIBUTORS WERE WILLING FOR UNIFIL TO CONTINUE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED HOWEVER THAT THIS WAS ANOTHER REASON FOR DRAPER TO MAKE EARLY PROGRESS SO THAT THERE WAS AN ACTIVE PROCESS IN BEING BY THE TIME OF THE NEXT UNIFIL DEBATE. IT WOULD OF COURSE BE NECESSARY FOR THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO REQUEST THE RENEWAL OF UNIFIL'S MANDATE; HE HOPED THAT WE WOULD TAKE ANY OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOURAGE BESHIR TO DO SO.

WRIGHT

NNNN