

010

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

We want to see directly overhauled - and we're in a PRALMR.

Paul Martin

28 October 1982

John [unclear]

JH 28/10

Lebanon: UK Participation in the Multinational Force

As you will have seen from UKMIS telnos 1746 and 1747 (copies enclosed) the Americans have made an informal request for a British contribution to the Multinational Force in Lebanon. In the American view, an expanded force has an essential role to play in ensuring the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon. We know that the Lebanese are also keen on a British contribution.

This is an unwelcome if not unexpected request. No immediate decision is needed. Mr Pym is aware of the Prime Minister's unwillingness to take on another military commitment overseas, but believes that we should await further details before considering carefully how we should react. Meanwhile the Americans are approaching a wide range of other potential contributors and would probably find particularly unhelpful any early negative indication from us in public. For the moment we are discussing with the Ministry of Defence and the Treasury what we might be able to offer the Lebanese in the way of training for the Lebanese army, and perhaps police force.

I am copying this to Richard Mottram (MOD).

Yours
[Signature]

JH (J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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BTC



file

Lebanon

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 November 1982

LEBANON: UK PARTICIPATION IN THE
MULTINATIONAL FORCE

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 11 November to John Holmes conveying the view of the Secretary of State for Defence that, subject to the Prime Minister's views, we could agree in principle to training for the Lebanese Army.

The Prime Minister considers that we could agree to provide limited training facilities.

I am copying this letter to John Holmes (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and John Rhodes (Department of Trade).

A J COLES

Miss J.E. Ridley,
Ministry of Defence

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Prime Minister
Would you be prepared in principle
to consider proposals for training the
Lebanese army?

①

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~3307222~~ 218 2111/3

A.J.C. 11/11

*Yes - limited
training
facilities
no*

MO 3/7/4

11th November 1982

Dear John,

mt

LEBANON: UK PARTICIPATION IN THE
MULTINATIONAL FORCE

The Secretary of State for Defence has seen your letter of 28th October and notes that the Lebanese have now made a formal request for our participation. Like the Prime Minister he is concerned that we should not take on new military commitments at the present time. Aside from our NATO commitments, the continuing need to protect the Falklands, and the Gibraltar problem to which John Coles has referred, we also have an outstanding request from you to contribute a signals squadron to the UN force in Namibia. Moreover, the continued presence of a British garrison in Belize does nothing to relieve the current severe strain on our resources.

The question of training for the Lebanese Army may be less difficult. Mr Nott believes, subject to the Prime Minister's views, that we could agree to this in principle, although we would need to look very carefully at the requirement in relation to all our other current and proposed commitments. There could be problems of availability if we were asked to provide either a large number of trainers or certain specialists. We would also need to have adequate notice in order to make any necessary administrative arrangements. I understand that the Americans have prepared a survey of Lebanese training needs, and it would be helpful to see this as soon as possible. In addition to this, Mr Nott would propose that a member of the Military Assistance Office should visit the Lebanon as soon as possible to assess the requirement and report on the feasibility of providing such assistance. We could then more fully assess the implications. We would, of course, expect the costs to be met by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and I understand that you are currently looking into this.

Finally, the Defence Secretary believes that one of the most useful and visible ways in which the UK could help the Lebanese to reconstruct their army as a serious force for law and order is the provision of ECGD-backed credit for both defence and civil sales in suitable cases.

J E Holmes Esq

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I am copying this letter to John Coles (No 10) and to John Rhodes (DOT).

Yours ever,

Jane Ridley

(J E RIDLEY)(MISS)

Lebanon

Internal Situation

11 NOV 1974

BEIRUT
LEBANON

Lebanon

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES 17

PS
PS/MR HURD
PS/PUS
SIR J LEAHY
MR MOBERLY
SIR J BULLARD
HD/NENAD
HD/MED
HD/UND
HD/SEC DEPT
HD/REFERENCE?
HD/CONSULAR DEPT

NO 10 DOWNING STREET
CABINET OFFICE D10

ADVANCE COPY

IMMEDIATE

PUSD (2)
NEWS D
RESIDENT CLERK

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FM WASHINGTON 011800Z NOV 82
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 3512 OF 1 NOVEMBER 1982
INFO UKMIS NEW YORK AND BEIRUT.

Prime Minister
I have reminded the F/C.O.
of your views.
AB 2/4

UKMIS NEW YORK TELNO 1747: LEBANON/MULTINATIONAL FORCE (MNF).

We should
reply
as quickly
now
as

1. I ENDORSE MR HURD'S VIEW THAT WE SHOULD NOT RESPOND NEGATIVELY TO THE LATEST U S INFORMAL REQUESTS FOR A CONTRIBUTION TO THE MNF, AND THAT WE SHOULD BE AS POSITIVE AS POSSIBLE OVER TRAINING.
2. I REALISE THAT, IN ADDITION TO OUR NATO COMMITMENT, WE HAVE OBLIGATIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND, THE FALKLANDS, BELIZE ETC. ON THE OTHER HAND, WITH RESERVES, BALANCE OF PAYMENTS AND STERLING STRONG, WE ARE IN OTHER RESPECTS BETTER PLACED TO MAKE SOME CONTRIBUTION. SEEN FROM HERE, THERE IS A POTENTIAL DANGER THAT WHILE WE FOCUS ON PARTICULAR TROUBLE-SPOTS FOR US, OUR ATTENTION MAY BE DISTRACTED FROM OTHER AREAS WHICH ARE OF CENTRAL IMPORTANCE TO OUR NATIONAL INTERESTS, WITH A CONSEQUENT REDUCTION IN THE ROLE WE ARE PREPARED TO PLAY IN SUCH AREAS. THE MIDDLE EAST IS JUST SUCH AN AREA, BOTH NOW AND IN THE LONGER TERM.
3. THERE IS ALSO A SPECIAL U S STAKE IN THE AREA. THE PRESIDENT AND HIS ENTIRE ADMINISTRATION HAVE PLEDGED THEMSELVES TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARDS A LASTING PEACE AND WE HAVE GIVEN THEM PUBLIC AND DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT. THE U S ARE NOW BETTER PLACED THAN FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL. BUT THERE ARE CLEAR POLITICAL RISKS, INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC, FOR THEM IF THEY DO NOT. FAILURE TO BRING ABOUT THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES FROM LEBANON COULD DERAIL REAGAN'S PEACE INITIATIVE. AND THAT WOULD BE IN NO ONE'S INTEREST.

FROM LEBANON COULD DERAIL REAGAN'S PEACE INITIATIVE. AND THAT WOULD BE IN NO ONE'S INTEREST.

4. IN THE SHORT TERM, A UK CONTRIBUTION TO THE MNF WOULD DEMONSTRATE WIDER EUROPEAN SUPPORT FOR AMERICAN POLICY IN LEBANON AND HELP TO DEFUSE CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM OF AMERICAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT THERE. THE HIGH REPUTATION OF OUR ARMED SERVICES FOR PROFESSIONALISM WOULD ADD GREATLY TO THE CREDIBILITY OF THE MNF AND HELP TO ENSURE THAT IT ACHIEVES WHAT IT SETS OUT TO ACHIEVE.

5. MORE GENERALLY, SUCH A CONTRIBUTION WOULD HAVE TWO LASTING ADVANTAGES:

- I. IT WOULD REINFORCE OUR ROLE IN AN AREA OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO OUR OWN INTERESTS AND THOSE OF THE WEST AND THUS CONFIRM THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT AT BRIGHTON THAT 'BRITAIN IS A RELIABLE ALLY, RELIABLE IN NATO, RELIABLE BEYOND NATO...'
- II. IT WOULD ADD TO THE WEIGHT WE ALREADY CARRY WITH THE PRESENT U S ADMINISTRATION IN THE CONDUCT OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

WE CAN SURELY DO AS MUCH AS THE FRENCH AND CANNOT WISH TO DO LESS THAN THE ITALIANS. THE GERMANS, WITH THEIR HISTORY, ARE OF COURSE OUT OF THE RUNNING.

WRIGHT

NNNN

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file 16

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 November 1982

LEBANON: UK PARTICIPATION IN THE
MULTINATIONAL FORCE

Thank you for your letter of 28 October. The Prime Minister notes that Mr. Pym will be sending further advice on how we should respond to the American request that we should participate in the Multinational Force. But you should know that Mrs. Thatcher remains convinced that we should not participate. She feels that we are already over-stretched - and thinks we must bear in mind the possibility of a deterioration in the situation with respect to Gibraltar.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

John

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file 16

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1 November 1982

LEBANON: UK PARTICIPATION IN THE
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A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

8/11

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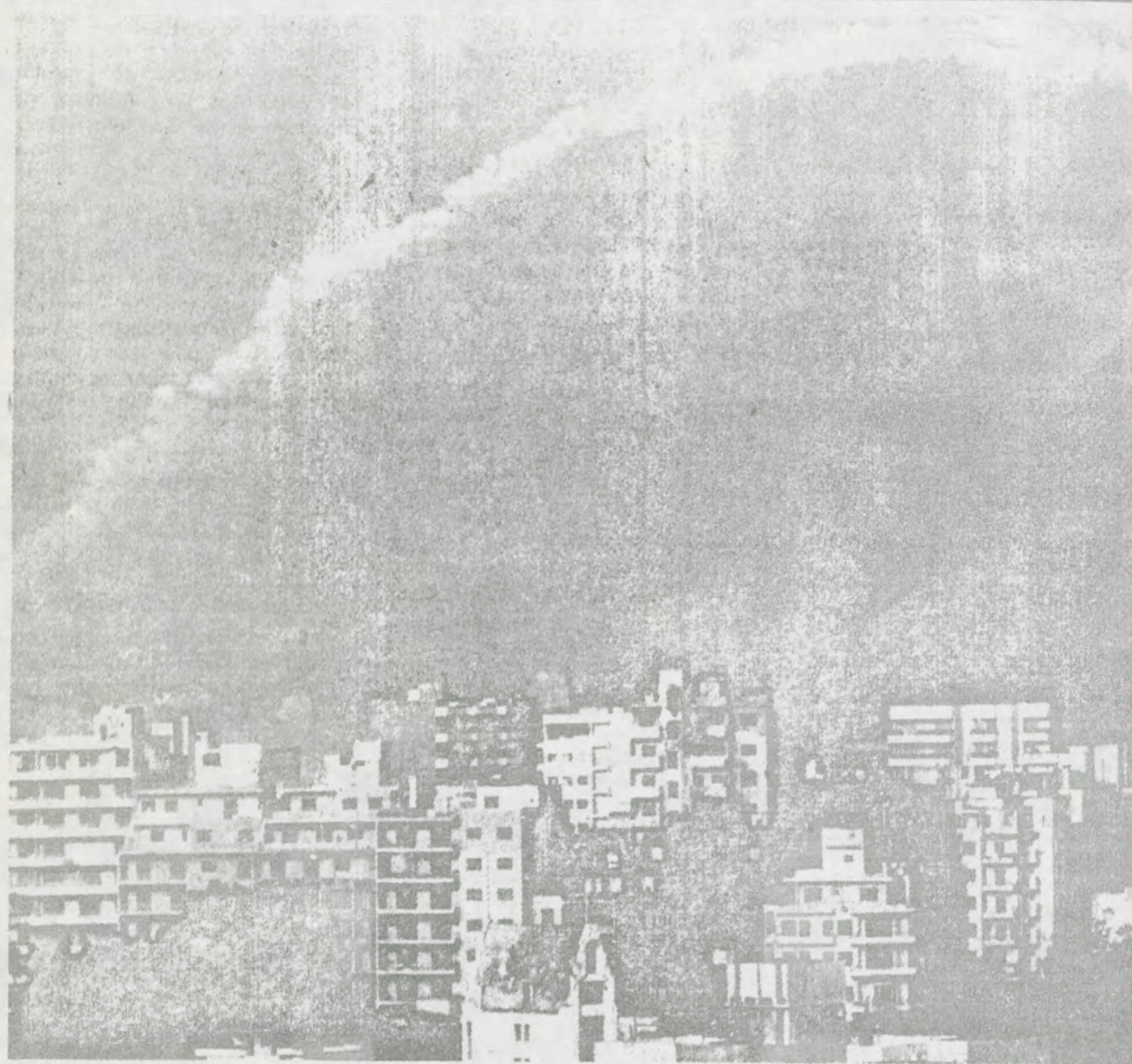
ARTICLES FROM THE PRESS

THE JERUSALEM
POST

October 29, 1982

Behind the lies in Lebanon

Pearl Sheffy Gefen learns about the discrepancies between media reports of the war and an eminent military historian's own observations



A rocket trail across the skyline during the height of the fighting in West Beirut.

A WEST POINT graduate who is equally at home in Damascus, Amman, Jerusalem and Cairo says he is

appalled by the "falsification and distortion of historical facts by those who know better" in media

reports on the war in Lebanon. U.S. Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy, Ret., is the president and executive

director of the Historical Evaluation and Research Organization, and the author of 80 books on military history, including his latest, *Great Battles on the Eastern Front: the Soviet-German War*, co-authored by Soviet military affairs authority, Paul Martell.

The son and grandson of professional soldiers, Col. Dupuy has just spent several days in Lebanon on his second intensive visit to that country since the war began in June, gathering material for his next book. His last on the Middle East, *Elusive Victory: the Arab-Israeli Wars 1947-1974*, has frequently been cited as the most authoritative military survey of those conflicts. He is regarded as an objective, open-minded historian in defence ministries and military headquarters around the world.

This tall, calm man of military bearing is concerned only with facts. "I will speak only of what I myself saw in Lebanon," he cautions, "and of calculations I can make and conclusions I can draw from professional military training, experience and study."

"One of my purposes in visiting Lebanon this summer — at my own expense and on my own initiative — was to see for myself how much truth there was to the press and television reports I had seen since early June."

His conclusion: "I am disgusted by the many false and irresponsible media reports by those who have a moral responsibility to present facts truthfully and objectively. Stories of harsh occupation policies and Israeli atrocities, which have sometimes been eagerly compared to the Nazi holocaust of World War II, could have been reported only by those who had no idea of what the Nazi Holocaust was."

"Tales of wanton destruction and devastation of such cities as Tyre, Sidon, Damour and Nabatiye are not only inconsistent with my own combat experience and the various studies I have made on the nature of urban destruction in past wars, but were obviously contrary to what I saw in those cities."

"Assertions that the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon has been marked by a harshness comparable to the Nazi actions would be laughable, were it not for the tragic and brutal enormity of the comparisons."

AMONG Dupuy's most startling examples were the reports of the bombing of West Beirut on August 12.

"According to headlines all over the world, on that day the Israeli air force launched its most intensive and devastating attack of the war on West Beirut. It was reported that hundreds of buildings were destroyed and nearly 1,000 people killed or wounded."

"Well, on that day I spent about five hours observing this bombardment. During that time, it was apparent from my observation that no more than 150 bombs, probably 200 to 500 kilograms each, were dropped on Beirut. As far as artillery bombardment was concerned, in the many Israeli positions I visited in and around East Beirut, I saw fewer shell bursts than bomb explosions during the time I was there."

"It must have been extremely unpleasant for people in West Beirut during that time, and the refugees I saw streaming through the Galerie Samaan checkpoint were obviously happy to be out. However, to any veteran who has been under air or artillery attack in 'normal' combat situations, this was relatively modest harassment."

"Therefore I was surprised to learn from a BBC broadcast that night that the bombardment was so intensive that President Reagan telephoned Prime Minister Begin to express 'outrage.'"

"My surprise turned to astonishment when I read in the August 14 issue of the *International Herald Tribune*, quoting PLO communiques, that the warplanes dropped 44,000 bombs and that 700 houses collapsed. The article did not comment on these statistics or present any differing assessment. So the reader could only conclude that the *Herald Tribune* believed these figures."

"I later discovered that *The Washington Post* of August 13 reported, again without comment, a statement made by the PLO representative in New York that 1,600 bombs and rockets were dropped and 42,000 shells fired."

"NOW, let's suppose that I am not a very good observer, that instead of 150 bombs, 2,000 were dropped during the five hours I was there watching. This means that 42,000 bombs would have had to be drop-

ped in the remaining six of the 11 hours during which the attack was reported to have taken place.

"That means 7,000 bombs per hour, or more than 100 per minute. No air force in the world could drop 42,000 substantial bombs on one target the size of Beirut in six hours, or drop 44,000 bombs — 4,000 per hour or 70 per minute — in 11 hours."

"The Israeli air force has fewer than 600 combat aircraft. In a maximum effort, it might be able to commit 300 of these to such a mission, and these could probably fly three combat sorties each during 11 hours. This is a maximum potential of 900 sorties; and if each plane carried four bombs on each sortie, that would be an absolute maximum of 3,600 bombs, less than one-tenth of the number that the *Herald Tribune* reported."

"But I stick to my on-the-spot observation that the actual intensity was probably about one-tenth of that theoretical maximum, and thus less than one one-hundredth of the reported intensity."

"As to the *Washington Post* report, the figure of 1,600 bombs was theoretically possible, but suggests an intensity at least four times greater than what I saw. The reported 42,000 rounds of artillery fire would have required a bombardment averaging nearly 4,000 shells per hour. On the basis of what I saw, this could not possibly be true."

"How could responsible reporters present such figures without a word of comment?"

COL. DUPUY cites another report in the *International Herald Tribune* on August 16, in which the *Los Angeles Times* correspondent in Beirut, J. Michael Kennedy, wrote: "In a little more than two months, the Israelis have inflicted damage on West Beirut and Southern Lebanon to a degree that makes the year and a half of civil war 1975-76 seem almost minor."

Dupuy retorts: "One wonders if Mr. Kennedy ever visited Damour — once one of the most beautiful cities in Lebanon and now a ghost town. It was totally destroyed and many of its Christian inhabitants were killed by the PLO fighters in 1976."

Early in June, *The New York*

Times reported that Nabatiye and Sidon were destroyed. "When I drove through Nabatiye in mid-August," says Dupuy, "there were few signs of war damage. When I approached Sidon, I expected to see a ghost town with remnants of houses and rubble everywhere.

"After driving all through the city, I found some five blocks in the centre totally destroyed, and a number of houses along a 200-metre stretch of the waterfront seriously damaged. I estimate that this amounted to about 5 per cent of the city's dwellings. A number of other office buildings and houses suffered minor damage, but most were intact and untouched.

"The city itself was teeming with life, with thousands of people shopping at stores full of goods. Movie theatres were open and the traffic was worse than a New York rush hour."

As another example of misrepresentation in the media, he describes a photograph of a woman mourning at a graveside in Beirut, which appeared in the August 2 issue of *U.S. News and World Report*. "Those who read Arabic could see, from the words on the tomb, that this was the grave of Halad Belaty who died on 29 Ramadan 1400, that is on August 10, 1980, almost two years before the Israeli invasion.

SPEAKING about the grossly exaggerated figures of civilian casualties, Dupuy says: "The sensational reports of tens of thousands of civilian casualties, some asserting 60,000 in South Lebanon alone, were clearly false and should have been recognized as such by the newsmen who made the reports. It should have been equally evident to those reporters that their stories of 600,000 homeless refugees were impossible, since this is roughly equal to the total population under Israeli control in Lebanon.

"There could have been no more than 20,000 refugees, many of whom I saw returning from the north to their homes in South Lebanon, and most of whom had become refugees when they were forced from their homes by the PLO occupation of South Lebanon in the late 1970s."

COL. DUPUY insists that "not only have I ground no one's axe in the Arab-Israeli conflict, I do not in-

tend to do so with respect to this latest eruption. As a historian, it seems to me too early to judge whether the Israeli operation in Lebanon was warranted, but the image and horrors of the war which I have seen between commercials on television in the U.S. were quite different from the picture I encountered in Lebanon.

"By focusing their television cameras exclusively on selected destroyed buildings, without showing the untouched neighbouring structures on the same street, the electronics journalists dramatically exaggerated the degree of devastation and failed to beam a balanced and comprehensive coverage.

"My own investigation on the spot led me to believe that there was nothing that could be termed either genocide or massacre committed by Israeli troops, as reported by some Western journalists.

Of the Beirut massacre he says: "It is too early to judge whether Israel's failure to prevent the bloodshed in the Shatilla and Sabra camps was due to negligence, blundering or worse. But whatever the Israeli responsibility for the tragic massacre of the Palestinians in those camps, this issue should not be confused with earlier accusations against Israel.

"Already it has been suggested that the massacre was confirmation of earlier charges about Israeli disregard for civilian lives in Lebanon, and that therefore the case against the Israelis may be taken as proved. This would be a grave injustice, because I think the record reveals that, prior to the Beirut massacre, the Israeli forces did in fact demonstrate a commendable concern for the safety of civilians — both Palestinians and Lebanese — in the war zone.

"WHETHER OR NOT the IDF should have been in Lebanon at all, or as far north as Beirut, are matters far too complex to debate in limited time. But I am convinced that, during the first three months of this latest Arab-Israeli war, the Israelis operated with punctilious respect for the laws of war and precepts of international morality.

"War has always been a bloody, destructive affair. It produces casualties, suffering and distress. But what was unusual in this particular war was, as the many

Lebanese with whom I talked emphasized; that the Israelis seem to have sincerely tried to keep the destruction and bloodshed to a minimum, and succeeded in doing so, scrupulously endeavouring to relate all their actions to legitimate military targets.

"I saw Israeli leaflets, and heard from local people, of warning announcements by loudspeakers before Israelis initiated attacks in civilian areas. The result, of course, was not only to permit non-combatants to take refuge, but also to alert the defending Arab forces, thereby increasing the likelihood of Israeli casualties.

"A number of other writers have already pointed out that the truth of what has happened in Lebanon is quite different from the media reports. Yet despite these fairly extensive and objective efforts to set the record straight, the press in general still tends to equate the performance of the Israeli forces in Lebanon with that of the hordes of Attila the Hun, Tamerlane and Himmler.

"It seems clear that the press and general public are much more interested in bad or inhumane performances by the Israelis than they are in similar performances by the PLO. There is a clear double standard here.

AS A MILITARY historian, I can think of no war in which greater military advantages were gained in combat in densely populated areas at such a small cost in civilian lives lost and property damaged, and this despite the PLO's deliberate emplacement of weapons in civilian communities, on and around hospitals.

"This, of course, forced the Israelis to attack such places, and the PLO gained a propaganda victory in the Western world and even in Israel, because of the double standard applied by the news media, which grossly distorted the facts and failed to present all the considerations.

"The Lebanese people were, for the most part, unimpressed by these reports, for several reasons. They had suffered severely for more than six years from the PLO influence in their country, and were prepared to welcome the Israelis as 'rescuers.'

"Secondly, they could see for themselves how the PLO used inno-

cent civilians as hostage shields around their weapon sites, and the moderation exercised by the Israelis in dealing with this situation. As a result, the Israelis were able to operate in an essentially friendly environment and allow local Lebanese authorities full responsibility for local affairs.

"IN THE TOWNS and villages I saw, there was no occupying force dominating the townspeople with emplaced weapons. The only signs of an Israeli military presence was a passing truck or jeep, or a few

soldiers strolling through teeming outdoor markets. At the same time, farmers till the fields and harvest crops all around the Israeli positions and even in no-man's-land between Israeli and Syrian lines."

However, Dupuy warns, "any army on foreign soil eventually wears out any welcome it may have enjoyed, and the tragedy in West Beirut indicates that time is running short for the Israelis in Lebanon. No matter how wise and benevolent the occupation policy has been, the cruel massacre of Palestinian Moslems by Phalangist Christians in

an area under Israeli control has grievously stained the Israelis and their image.

"It is clear that Israel must be ready to leave Lebanon at the same time as do the Syrians and the remnants of the PLO and it is in their best interest to hasten such a simultaneous withdrawal. Then they can perhaps still capitalize on the goodwill of their earlier occupation policy and form a strong bond with a free Lebanon."
