



MO 3/7/4

PRIME MINISTERLEBANON

You asked me to look into the possibility of providing a small contribution to the Lebanon Multinational Force for a period of three months.

2. It would be possible for us to provide an armoured reconnaissance unit of approximately 80 men for this period without undue penalty, subject to the resolution of a satisfactory status of forces agreement and command and control. There are two armoured reconnaissance squadrons in Cyprus: one with UNFICYP and one dedicated to the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs). Both consist of six troops each of four Scout cars. I would envisage deploying a squadron headquarters and four troops. My preferred option would be to take these from the UNFICYP squadron, leaving two troops in situ; but the Foreign Secretary will wish to advise on whether this is likely to prove acceptable to the UN Commander in Cyprus and to the Cypriot Government. As a sweetener, we could offer to reinforce the two troops from the SBA squadron in time of emergency.

3. Failing this, we could provide a squadron from the SBA. This would leave a gap in our force levels, but I believe this would not be unacceptable for three months. If, however, there were any question of the commitment extending beyond that period it would be necessary to replace the squadron with one from UK; this would take eight weeks and could add considerably both to turbulence for the men involved and their families, and to the overall cost of the exercise. We should moreover need to begin contingency preparations almost immediately. I would not recommend





attempting to form an ad hoc unit, since our experience has shown that such units lack cohesion and can have problems of morale, administration and discipline.

4. In short, the best option would be to withdraw the majority of the squadron from UNFICYP. As a fall-back option, we could send a squadron from the SBA. Whichever we do, I believe we must be quite clear from the outset that there would be no question of our remaining in Lebanon beyond the three months.
5. I am copying this to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

*J. Ridley*  
*(Private Secretary)*  
*Draft agreed by the*  
*Defence Secretary and*  
*signed in his absence.*

Ministry of Defence  
14th December 1982



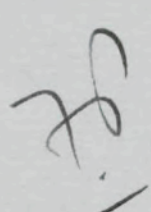


PM/82/107

PRIME MINISTER

Lebanon: UK Contribution to the Multinational Force

1. I have seen the Defence Secretary's minute of 14 December about a possible UK contribution to the Multinational Force in Lebanon, which we are to discuss at our meeting tomorrow.
2. In the circumstances, and given Dr Saïem's attitude in his talk with you, I agree that deployment of men from UNFICYP is the best option. We shall need to convince both the UN Secretary-General and the Cyprus government that this does not mean any weakening in our commitment to UNFICYP. But an assurance that we can reinforce UNFICYP from the Sovereign Base Areas in time of emergency should be sufficient for this purpose. If necessary I have no doubt that the US and Lebanese governments would make representations to the Cyprus government in our support.
3. Another argument in favour of the UNFICYP option is financial: subject to an exact calculation of the costs involved, we shall probably be able to meet the extra costs of deployment from UNFICYP from the FCO's existing resources.
4. I am copying this to the Defence Secretary.

  
(FRANCIS PYM)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

14 December 1982



CONFIDENTIAL



file

B.P

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

15 December 1982

LEBANON: UK CONTRIBUTION TO THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE

Having seen your Secretary of State's minute of 14 December and the minute of the same date by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Prime Minister has decided that there is no need for a meeting on this subject today.

Mrs. Thatcher agrees that the United Kingdom should provide an armoured reconnaissance of approximately 80 men for the multinational force for a period of three months. She considers that these should be taken from UNFICYP and agrees with Mr. Pym's views on the handling of the UN Secretary General and the Cyprus Government. She agrees that the costs of this deployment should be met from the FCO's existing resources.

The Prime Minister also agrees with your Secretary of State that it should be made quite clear from the outset that there would be no question of our remaining in Lebanon beyond a period of three months.

I am copying this letter to John Holmes (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

A. J. COLES

Richard Mottram, Esq.,  
Ministry of Defence

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

Your meeting with Mr. Pym and Mr. Nott at 1730 was arranged to discuss the multi-national force in the Lebanon. I attach an MOD letter about this question.

It would also be a convenient time to settle the question of whether or not we are prepared to sell six Hunter aircraft to the Zimbabwe Air Force. I attach papers about that as well.

A.J.C.

14 December 1982