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cc Sir A Parsons



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

19 July 1983

Dear John

UK Contribution to the Multinational Force (MNF)

Richard Mottram informed me by telephone this morning that in view of the Ministry of Defence's strong preference to use UK-based troops for the extension of our contribution to the Multinational Force, Mr Heseltine had agreed with Sir Geoffrey Howe's suggestion (my letter of 18 July) that the Ministry of Defence would meet the full additional cost of £370,000 which would otherwise fall to the FCO budget. The way is now clear therefore for us to inform the Lebanese Government of the extension of our deployment and to make a public announcement.

In his letter of ^{Adj} 5 July to John Coles, John Holmes said that Sir Geoffrey Howe believed that we should not carry conviction if we were to say publicly yet again that our contribution is limited to a further 3 months. He therefore proposed that we should inform the Lebanese and other parties concerned that we shall keep our continued participation under close review, and that we have no intention of being drawn into a lengthy commitment. We would, nevertheless, for our own purpose reconsider the position after 3 months.

It would be appropriate to announce the extension of our contribution in the House during oral Questions to the FCO tomorrow. Mr Robert Brown MP has put down a question to ask the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary 'whether he has had discussions with the Lebanese Government concerning the future deployment of the British contingent to the Multinational Force in Lebanon'. Sir Geoffrey Howe proposes that the reply (which would be given by Mr Luce) should be as follows:

'We are informing the Lebanese Government that we are willing to extend our deployment for a limited period beyond 7 August. We shall

/continue

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continue to keep in close touch with the Lebanese government and the other contributors to the Multinational Force, and the deployment of the British contingent will be kept under review.'

Sir Geoffrey Howe would be grateful to know before mid-day tomorrow (Wednesday) whether the Prime Minister, Mr Heseltine and the Chief Secretary are content with what he proposes. If so, we would at the same time inform the Lebanese government and the other troop contributors of our decision. We would also tell the United Nations Secretariat and the Cyprus Government that we intend after 7 August to use UK-based troops, and thus to restore our UNFICYP contingent to its full strength.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Terry Matthews (Treasury).

Yours ever,

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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Middle East

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

20 July 1983

o

UK Contribution to the Multinational Force (MNF)

Thank you for your letter of 19 July.

As I told you on the telephone, the Prime Minister is content that Mr. Luce should reply to an oral Question on the MNF today on the lines you propose.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Terry Matthews (HM Treasury).

A. J. COLES

Brian Fall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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N. B. P. R.

ADL 20/7

h-a.

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

B J P Fall Esq
 Private Secretary
 Foreign & Commonwealth Office
 Downing Street
 LONDON
 SW1A 2AL

20 July 1983

Dear Brian

UK CONTRIBUTION TO THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE (MNF) IN LEBANON

*with
AJC*
 The Chief Secretary has seen your letter of 18 July to Richard Mottram and your letter of 19 July to John Coles. This is to confirm that he can now agree to the extension of the UK contribution to the MNF and to the replacement of the existing contingent by troops drawn from the UK, providing that the cost is shared between FCO and MOD and accommodated within their existing expenditure provisions.

The Chief Secretary notes Sir Geoffrey Howe's view that, if the commitment is continued beyond November, the costs could not be met by the FCO. The Chief Secretary reserves his position on that: he cannot of course accept the concept that longer term recurring commitments are a proper charge on the Contingency Reserve. If FCO now consider that UK participation in the Lebanon MNF is a long term commitment, provision should be made for it in departmental expenditure programmes. If necessary, the question could be considered in the Public Expenditure Survey. In any event in the Chief Secretary's view officials should consider the means of financing any further extension to our present commitment to the MNF in good time before the matter is raised again at Ministerial level.

The Chief Secretary has noted also Sir Geoffrey Howe's position on the current review of the UK contribution UNFICYP. He too has no wish to prejudge the outcome of this review but nevertheless considers that we should make every effort to secure worthwhile economies in this area of FCO expenditure.

Turning to the draft Parliamentary answer, He would favour the addition of an extra sentence on the following lines: "The cost will be met from within existing expenditure provisions."

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I am copying this to John Coles and to Richard Mottram.

Yours sincerely

J. Gieve

JOHN GIEVE

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Middle East
Situations Kent 11

20 JUL 1983

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
 MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB
 Telephone 01-~~930 7022~~ 218 2111/3

MO 3/7/4

19th July 1983

N. B. P. R.

MR 207

h.c.

Dear Brian,

UK CONTRIBUTION TO THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE (MNF)

Mr Heseltine has seen your letter to me of 18th July on the future funding arrangements for our contingent (BRITFORLEB) serving with the Multinational Force (MNF) in Lebanon.

It is his view that peacekeeping operations are foreign policy initiatives and should therefore remain the financial responsibility of the FCO. He sees no difference between the roles of the MNF and the conventional or traditional UN peacekeeping role, which was described by our Ambassador at the UN during the debate on the Renewal of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) Mandate on 18th July as "the role of holding the ring militarily whilst politicians and diplomats attempt to solve the underlying problems".

Mr Heseltine does, however, recognise that the FCO's short term financial problems are not eased by our preference for undertaking the commitment in Lebanon using troops normally based in the UK. He is therefore prepared for the MOD to bear the difference in the costs to the FCO between this course and your preferred option of again drawing troops from our UNFICYP contingent. The resulting provision of £370,000 from the MOD budget to cover the three month period from August to November is made without prejudice to the funding of BRITFORLEB after November, to how any such commitment should be undertaken, or to the established MISC 42 principle of how peacekeeping operations should be funded. MOD officials have agreed with the Treasury that a PESC transfer from this Department to yours will be necessary in order to make this provision.

Mr Heseltine fully agrees with Sir Geoffrey Howe's comments on the UNFICYP Review.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Prime Minister and to the Chief Secretary.

Yours ever,

John E. Ridley
 (J E RIDLEY) (MISS)

B J P Fall Esq

GAP



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

18 July 1983

Dear Richard,

See my letter of
20 July to Mr. Fall.

M 20

UK Contribution to the Multinational Force (MNF)

with DRC?

Sir Geoffrey Howe has seen Jane Ridley's letter of 8 July giving Mr Heseltine's view on the extension of our contribution to the Multinational Force (MNF) and John Gieve's letter of 12 July about the financial aspects. Since then, MOD officials have given us revised figures for the full costs to be charged for a three month deployment. These are £790,000 if troops from the UK are used, and £720,000 if we continue to use troops drawn from our UNFICYP contingent.

Sir Geoffrey Howe has noted the Chief Secretary's view that the FCO's unallocated provision was designed to accommodate foreign policy initiatives of this sort. He does not necessarily accept that deployments which are not United Nations peacekeeping operations are a proper charge on the FCO. Moreover he considers that it was not envisaged that the FCO's contingency reserve would be drained by large recurring payments of the size of our contribution to the MNF, nor that they should cover such longer term commitments which in his view are a proper charge on the Central Contingency Reserve.

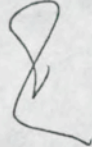
Nevertheless, in view of the urgent need for the Ministry of Defence to decide whether the troops to be used after 7 August should be drawn from the UK or from UNFICYP, Sir Geoffrey Howe is willing to meet, without prejudice to the principle, out of the FCO's unallocated reserves the costs of a further three month extension of our contribution. He has noted the strong preference of Mr Heseltine to draw on UK-based forces and he realises that the absence of part of our contingent is unwelcome to the UN Commander and the Cyprus government. However, bearing in mind the substantial offsetting saving to the FCO contribution to UNFICYP of £300,000 from using troops from there, he hopes that Mr Heseltine will agree either that we should continue to draw on our UNFICYP contingent or that the MOD should finance the total £370,000 difference if troops from the UK are used. Even with this saving, the costs of one more extension of BRITFORLEB will almost entirely exhaust the FCO's unallocated reserve for this financial year. If therefore there is to be any continuation of this commitment after November, Sir Geoffrey Howe will expect the costs to be met from elsewhere.

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Sir Geoffrey Howe has also noted the Chief Secretary's views about the current review of the UK contribution to UNFICYP. He sees no reason to prejudge the outcome of this review and in any case he understands that the review is unlikely to affect the scout car squadron at present deployed in Lebanon.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Prime Minister and to the Chief Secretary.

Aduswar


(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

R Mottram Esq
Ministry of Defence

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18 JUL 1983



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cc No



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

J E Holmes Esq
Private Secretary
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AL

See later correspondence.

MR 2/7

12 July 1983

h-c

Dev Jst.

LEBANON: UK CONTRIBUTION TO THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE (MNF)

with J.C.?

The Chief Secretary has seen copies of your letter of 5 July to John Coles and of Jane Ridley's letter of 8 July. In his view it would be quite wrong to agree to the extension of the deployment of the UK contingent in the Lebanon MNF until the financing question has been settled; nor can he accept any claim on the Contingency Reserve for this purpose. The importance of keeping down public expenditure this year does not need any further underlining. In the Chief Secretary's view the proper course is for FCO and MOD together to work out the cost of the proposed extension and how it can be accommodated within their existing expenditure provisions. The FCO's unallocated provision was of course designed to accommodate foreign policy initiatives of this sort. If neither Department is prepared to accept the cost (which I understand is in the order of £700,000 - £1 million for a three months' extension), the conclusion should be that the policy is not of sufficient priority to be worth pursuing.

On the question of whether the UK contingent should continue to be drawn from Cyprus or from the UK the Chief Secretary notes Mr Heseltine's preference for drawing on UK based forces and for returning the present contingent to Cyprus. Both the Chancellor and the Chief Secretary however are convinced that it would not be appropriate to restore the strength of the UK contingent in UNFICYP until Ministers have seen the findings of the current review of the level of our commitment to this force which should be available in early October. As you may know, that review, is not simply a "housekeeping" exercise. Its objective is to assess the maximum possible scope for economies. If in advance of the review Mr Heseltine wishes to replace our contingent in the Lebanon with UK based troops, the Chief Secretary considers that MOD should be prepared to bear the additional cost.

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As regards the time limit for any extension, the Chief Secretary is content with Sir Geoffrey Howe's proposal that if Ministers agree to an extension this decision should be considered again in three months time. He notes Mr Heseltine's view that from a military planning point of view a six months extension would be preferable but considers that the decision on this matter should rest with the Department which is responsible for paying for the contribution.

I am copying this letter to John Coles and Richard Mottram.

Yours sincerely

J. Gieve

JOHN GIEVE

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 01-~~230 222~~ 218 2111/3

AP

MO 3/7/4

8th July 1983

See later correspondence.

Dear John

Mr 20/7

b-c

LEBANON: UK CONTRIBUTION TO THE MNF

with ASC?

Thank you for your letter of 30th June which has been seen by the Defence Secretary. This raises three main issues.

First, I can confirm that Mr Heseltine accepts that there is a strong political case, for the reasons set out in your letter, for a continuing British contribution to the MNF. If we do remain, however, it would be preferable from a military planning point of view for this to be for a period of six months rather than three (subject of course to the possibility that our contribution might no longer be needed from some earlier date).

Secondly there is the question of whether the force should continue to be drawn from Cyprus or from the UK. The Defence Secretary's view on this remains as expressed in his minute of 3rd May to the then Foreign Secretary. Our strong preference would be to draw on UK based forces for any future deployment in the Lebanon. As Mr Heseltine's minute pointed out, the absence of two thirds of the UNFICYP squadron is placing unreasonable demands on the remaining two troops, and as you will be aware, the UN have made strong representations to have the force restored to full strength. The Defence Secretary has noted the view expressed in John Gieve's letter of 1st July to John Coles that the current review of UNFICYP should have a bearing on this question. However, it is our understanding that the scope of this review, agreed between Treasury, FCO and MOD officials, is that it should be a primarily "housekeeping" exercise designed to see if we can carry out effectively the functions entrusted to UNFICYP more economically by reduction, for example, in logistic support. It is thus most unlikely that the review will suggest any significant changes in the armoured reconnaissance capability which is the most valuable operational contribution we make to the force. Moreover we face the problem of replacing the BRITFORLEB contribution now, whereas the review of UNFICYP is scheduled to allow decisions to be taken in time for the next renewal of the mandate at the end of this year. The review should therefore not stand in the way of the early restoration of the UNFICYP squadron to full strength.

J E Holmes Esq



This raises the third issue, that of finance. We appreciate that to cease to fund BRITFORLEB from resources originally intended for UNFICYP will place an additional burden on the FCO budget. But MISC 42 was quite clear that peacekeeping operations, which are carried out for essentially political rather than defence policy reasons, should be paid for by the FCO, and Mr Heseltine sees no reason for re-opening this issue. He would, however, be willing to support the Foreign Secretary in an approach to the Chancellor for an additional allocation to FCO votes to meet the cost of BRITFORLEB. Although the original decision was that the contribution should be met from existing programmes, this was on the understanding that the commitment would be for three months only. Now that we are considering a second extension of the force there is clearly a case for reconsidering this point.

Finally I should also mention the question of the possible deployment of BRITFORLEB outside the Beirut area. While we remain opposed to the original Lebanese proposal for an extension into the Chouf, another proposal has now been put forward for a more limited extension involving patrolling the coast road from Beirut to Damour. This is something which we would not rule out, provided there were corresponding reductions in our present patrol programme and that there was no requirement for additional UK forces. The details of this proposal are being studied further at present.

Yours ever,

(J E RIDLEY) (MISS)

Middle East
Situation
Pt 11

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

5 July 1983

*See later correspondence.**WA 27/7.**Dear John,*UK Contribution to the Multinational Force (MNF)

Sir Geoffrey Howe has seen a copy of John Gieve's letter of 1 July to you.

He considers that, if we decide to extend the commitment after the second three month period which ends in August, we should make absolutely clear to the Lebanese and other parties concerned that we shall keep our continued participation under close review and that we have no intention of being drawn into a lengthy commitment. He is content that this should mean for our purposes that we reconsider the position after three months, and that there is no agreement to deployment beyond that time, but believes that we should not carry conviction if we were to say publicly yet again that our contribution is limited to a further three months.

As far as future financing is concerned, Sir Geoffrey Howe is unable to agree that the cost of any extension in Lebanon should simply be met from his existing expenditure programmes. The expenditure has already been borne by the FCO for six months on a full-costs basis. He is unable to identify off-setting savings in other programmes which would enable him to fund a further extension, even of only three months. Our small contingency reserves would be virtually exhausted if he did so (particularly if the considerably more expensive option of using troops from the UK rather than Cyprus were adopted). While of course we hope that the MNF contingent will not be a continuing liability, its extension beyond the existing period does mean, in Sir Geoffrey Howe's view, that it is no longer an appropriate use of these small reserves but rather a proper call on the Central Contingency Reserve which exists for these purposes. If the Chief Secretary insists that the financial implications should be agreed before a decision on

/extension

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extension is made, Sir G Howe will wish to make a bid for provision from the CCR accordingly. In any event, as I indicated in my letter of 30 June, he will wish at least to discuss the existing 'full costs' formula with his colleagues.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and the Defence Secretary.

Yours ever

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J E Holmes', written over the typed name and title.

A J Coles Esq
Number 10 Downing Street

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MIDDLE EAST. Situation
Pt II





Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

A J Coles Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

1 July 1983

See later correspondence.

Dear Tsr.

MR 27/6

LEBANON: UK CONTRIBUTION TO THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE (MNF)

The Chief Secretary has seen John Holmes' letters of 28 and 30 June to you and Richard Mottram respectively. It is in his view essential that the financial implications of extending the UK's commitment to the MNF should be considered before, not after, a decision is taken. Whilst he recognises the political difficulty in withdrawing the UK contingent (despite the original intention that it should not remain longer than 3 months whatever the circumstances in the Lebanon), he doubts whether it is wise to extend our commitment without specifying any time limit. He also questions whether the present contingent needs to be replaced by UK based troops rather than from UNFICYP, given the current review of the level of the UK commitment there requested by Sir Geoffrey Howe as Chancellor. In any event the Chief Secretary is firmly of the view that the cost of any extension of our commitment to the MNF in Lebanon should be met from existing programmes in line with the Prime Minister's original decision.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Holmes and Richard Mottram

*Yours sincerely
Tsr. Gieve*

JOHN GIEVE
Private Secretary

Middle East,
Situation, P11



Treasury Chamber, Robinson Street, W.P. 370

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1 JUL 1983

CONFIDENTIAL

TOP SECRET

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

30 June 1983

See later correspondence

MR 20/7

h.c.

Dear Richard,

Lebanon: UK Contribution to the Multinational Force (MNF)

As you know, we need to reach an early decision on the future of our contingent with the Multinational Force (MNF) in Lebanon. At present our contingent (BRITFORLEB) is committed until 7 August 1983, or until a substantial Israeli withdrawal. Although the Lebanese have not yet made a formal request for a further extension, they clearly expect us to stay. They have also recently asked all MNF contributors to be prepared to deploy their contingents outside Beirut if, as seems likely, the Israelis resort to a partial withdrawal of their forces to Southern Lebanon.

Sir Geoffrey Howe is all too conscious of the danger of being drawn into an indefinite commitment in Lebanon. It is always going to be difficult to find a right time to withdraw and our luck on casualties may not hold. But having considered this carefully he is convinced that, despite the risks, we should maintain our contribution to the MNF for the time being. The combination of the following arguments seems to him to be compelling:

- (a) We have a clear interest in supporting the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese army. Their need for such support is very great.
- (b) The Lebanese are delighted with our contingent's performance and will be severely disappointed if we desert them now.
- (c) Our participation gives us the possibility of influence on US policy and credibility for a wider Middle East role.
- (d) The Americans would not understand why we were withdrawing now, when the situation demands a calming international presence more than ever. They have put in a strong plea to us to stay on (Mr Habib spoke particularly eloquently to Sir Anthony Acland in Washington last week) and would react very badly if we decided to pull out.

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- (e) It would be, to say the least, difficult for us to explain to the French and Italians, who both have far larger contingents than us, why we were leaving, particularly in the light of the Stuttgart reaffirmation of support for Lebanon.
- (f) A decision to pull out would also attract domestic criticism, including in Parliament, and would not be easy to present.

If we decide to stay on, we must obviously do all we can to limit the risks. In particular, in confirming to the Lebanese our willingness to maintain our contribution to the MNF for the time being, Sir Geoffrey Howe would propose to make clear that BRITFORLEB should stay within the Beirut area, whether or not the MNF as a whole took on a wider role, as the Lebanese wish (although we should recognise that we may come under pressure on this in some circumstances). We would also make clear that while we wanted to maintain our support for the Lebanese government we could not afford an indefinite commitment to the Multinational Force, from which we would be looking for an early withdrawal. And we propose to explore the possibility of our own contingent being rotated with another contributor (Belgium is a possibility), and to look again at alternative ways of helping the Lebanese Army and Internal Security Forces eg through training.

Our understanding at official level is that the Ministry of Defence should be able to find the men for an extended deployment in Lebanon at BRITFORLEB's present strength. But if the Defence Secretary agrees to extension, we also need to decide whether the men should come from Cyprus as at present, or from the UK, as we understand would be the military preference (and no doubt that of the UN Commander).

Sir Geoffrey Howe is very concerned that if the contingent is found from the UK the cost will increase considerably. A further three months from August could cost almost one million pounds, compared with some £1.2 million for the six months February - August. So far the cost has been borne entirely on the FCO vote on a full costs basis. Sir Geoffrey Howe very much doubts that this is manageable in the future, particularly if the cost increases. If it is agreed that the contingent should stay for the time being, therefore, he will need to pursue this question with the Defence Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

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I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries
to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer
and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever

John Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

R Mottram Esq
Ministry of Defence



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1P 2HH

28 June 1983

3/7/4

Dear John,

Lebanon: UK Contribution to the Multinational
Force (MNF)

We need to reach an early decision on the future of our contingent with the Multinational Force (MNF) in Lebanon. At present our contingent (BRITFORLEB) is committed until 7 August 1983, or until a substantial Israeli withdrawal. Although the Lebanese have not yet made a formal request for a further extension, they clearly expect us to stay. They have also recently asked all MNF contributors to be prepared to deploy their contingents outside Beirut if, as seems likely, the Israelis resort to a partial withdrawal of their forces to Southern Lebanon.

Sir Geoffrey Howe is all too conscious of the danger of being drawn into an indefinite commitment in Lebanon. It is always going to be difficult to find a right time to withdraw and our luck on casualties may not hold. But having considered this carefully, he is convinced that, despite the risks, we should maintain our contribution to the MNF for the time being. The combination of the following arguments seem to him to be compelling:

- (a) We have a clear interest in supporting the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese army. Their need for such support is very great.
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in a strong plea to us to stay on (Mr Habib spoke particularly eloquently to Sir Anthony Acland in Washington last week) and would react very badly if we decided to pull out.

- (e) It would be, to say the least, difficult for us to explain to the French and Italians, who both have far larger contingents than us, why we were leaving, particularly in the light of the Stuttgart reaffirmation of support for Lebanon.

If we decide to stay on, we must obviously do all we can to limit the risks. In particular, in confirming to the Lebanese our willingness to maintain our contribution to the MNF for the time being we would make clear that BRITFORLEB should stay within the Beirut area, whether or not the MNF as a whole took on a wider role, as the Lebanese wish (although we should recognise that we may come under pressure on this in some circumstances). We would also make clear that while we wanted to maintain our support for the Lebanese government we could not afford an indefinite commitment to the Multinational Force, from which we would be looking for an early withdrawal. We intend to explore the possibility of our own contingent being rotated with another contributor (Belgium is a possibility), and to look again at alternative ways of helping the Lebanese Army and Internal Security Forces e.g. through training.

I understand that the Ministry of Defence could find the men for an extended deployment in Lebanon at BRITFORLEB's present strength. But their strong military preference is to draw on UK forces beyond August 1983, and to return our UNFICYP commitment to its full strength. We accept that the absence of two-thirds of UNFICYP's armoured reconnaissance squadron has imposed a severe strain on our remaining forces there and has naturally been unwelcome to the UN commander. To continue to deplete our contribution to UNFICYP could be seen as a weakening of our commitment to Cyprus and to UN peacekeeping.

But if the contingent is found from the UK in future, the cost will increase considerably. A further three months from August could cost almost one million pounds, compared with some £1.2 million for the six months February-August. So far the cost has been borne entirely on the FCO vote on a full costs basis. Sir Geoffrey Howe very much doubts that this is manageable in the future, particularly if the cost increases.

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If it is agreed that the contingent should stay for the time being, therefore, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary will need to pursue this question with the Defence Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries of the Defence Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever
John Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street