

CONFIDENTIAL

GRS 560

CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 082357Z SEP 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 2518 OF 8 SEPTEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK (FOR PS/S OF S, PS/MR STANLEY, PS/DUS (P)
 AUS (D STAFF)) PARIS, ROME, BEIRUT, BRITFORLEB, MADRID (FOR BULLARD)
 PRIORITY DAMSCUS, TEL AVIV, JEDDA, UKMIS NEW YORK, AMMAN AND CAIRO

MY TELNO 2497 (NOT TO ALL): **LEBANON : MNF**

1. WHEN THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES CALLED TODAY ON ADMIRAL HOWE (DIRECTOR, POLITICO-MILITARY BUREAU, STATE DEPARTMENT) HOW SAID THAT THERE WAS STILL NO FIRM U S POSITION ON HOW TO REACT TO THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN THE LEBANON. THERE WAS NO DISPOSITION TO BELIEVE THAT A MAJOR CHANGE IN THE ROLE OF THE MNF WAS DESIRABLE OR THAT THE SIZE OF THE U S CONTINGENT ON-SHORE SHOULD BE EXPANDED. IT WAS ALSO NECESSARY TO ALLOW TIME FOR MCFARLANE'S DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO HAVE AN EFFECT. HOWEVER, THE AMERICANS WERE GOING TO BE MORE ACTIVE IN DEFENCE OF THEIR CONTINGENT AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE MNF. HOWE ACKNOWLEDGED THE DIFFICULTY OF DEALING WITH FIRE SOME OF WHICH WAS COMING FROM HEAVILY POPULATED AREAS. HE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED HERE TO THE INCREASED U S AND FRENCH NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN, WHICH HE SAW AS A WAY OF IMPRESSING THE SYRIANS AND DETERRING ATTACKS ON THE MNF.

2. HOWE WENT ON TO PUT TO THE MINISTER OF STATE A PERSONAL REQUEST THAT HMG SHOULD BEGIN THINKING ABOUT HOLDING UP OFF BEIRUT, FOR A WHILE, THE RN TASK FORCE HEADED FOR THE INDIAN OCEAN: OR OTHERWISE ENHANCING OUR NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE AREA IN ADDITION TO THE U S AND FRENCH CARRIERS ALREADY THERE. THIS WOULD SEND A CLEAR SIGNAL TO THE SYRIANS AND ENCOURAGE THE STABILISATION OF THE SITUATION IN THE LEBANON. HOWE ADDED THAT FRENCH VIEWS ON HOW TO REACT TO THE SITUATION SEEMED TO BE VERY CLOSE TO THOSE HELD IN WASHINGTON.

3. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH ME, AT WHICH MY FRENCH AND GERMAN COLLEAGUES WERE ALSO PRESENT, EAGLEBURGER CONFIRMED THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD VERY SHORTLY BE CONSIDERING THE AUTHORISATION OF MEASURES WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE U S CONTINGENT OF THE MNF TO DEFEND THEMSELVES MORE EFFECTIVELY. HE ADDED THAT THERE WOULD BE CONSULTATION WITH OTHER MNF CONTRIBUTORS ABOUT THIS. EAGLEBURGER COMMENTED THAT, ALTHOUGH THE MNF WAS NOW IN A MUCH MORE DISAGREEABLE POSITION THAN IT HAD BEEN EARLIER, IT WAS REASONABLE TO SAY THAT, IF THE MNF HAD NOT BEEN ON THE GROUND IN LEBANON, THERE WOULD PROBABLY BY NOW BE NO LEBANON. AS FAR AS THE WAR POWERS ACT WAS CONCERNED, PRELIMINARY SOUNDINGS INDICATED THAT THERE WAS MORE SUPPORT IN CONGRESS FOR THE U S CONTRIBUTION TO THE MNF THAN THE ADMINISTRATION HAD ORIGINALLY EXPECTED.

CONFIDENTIAL

/4.

CONFIDENTIAL

4. WE HAVE SINCE SOUNDED A MEMBER OF THE NSC STAFF ABOUT THE U S ASSESSMENT OF THE SYRIAN ATTITUDE. DUR SAID THAT THE SYRIANS WERE SENDING MIXED SIGNALS: THEY WERE DETERMINED TO GET THEIR OWN WAY IN LEBANON BUT ALSO SEEMED INTERESTED IN A CEASEFIRE. THE AMERICANS WOULD TRY TO MAINTAIN A CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE WITH THEM. LEBANESE AND SYRIAN CONDITIONS FOR AN AGREEMENT WERE NOT COMPATIBLE: BUT THERE WAS STILL A CHANCE THAT MCFARLANE'S AND BANDAR'S EFFORTS WOULD SUCCEED. DUR MADE NO MENTION OF THE IDEAS OUTLINED IN PARAS 6 AND 7 OF BEIRUT TELNO 489.

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

WRIGHT

MIDDLE EAST

STANDARD

NENAD	MAED
MED	ESSD
NAD	ERD
SAD	ESID
UND	CONS D
EESD	CONS EM UNIT
ECD	MR EGERTON
WED	MR THOMAS
RID	
SEC D	CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE

2
CONFIDENTIAL