



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

15 September 1983

John Andrew,

Cyprus and the Lebanon

There are signs that, as the situation in the Lebanon deteriorates, we may be faced with formal requests by our allies and fellow contributors to the multinational force to use the Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus in support of their forces. As you will know, the Italians have made some informal enquiries about the possible basing of Italian military aircraft at Akrotiri to provide support for Italian forces in the Lebanon. The Americans have also been exploring the possibility that Akrotiri might be used as a staging post for transporting equipment and ammunition to the Lebanon. This letter sets out some of the considerations which need to be borne in mind in considering any request of this nature.

The 1960 Treaty of Establishment which established the Republic of Cyprus and by which we retained the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) allows us free use of the SBAs as military bases without legal constraint. The Bases, and other sites in Cyprus which we are able to use, serve a useful military purpose.

The trouble-free operation of the Bases depends upon the cooperation of the Cyprus Government. Cyprus is of course determinedly non-aligned. Despite opposition to a continued British presence on the island by the electorally important Communist Party in Cyprus, relations with the Cyprus Government over the running of the Bases are good. That this is the case is to a large extent due to our policy of maintaining a low-profile over our use of the Bases and our efforts to take account of Cypriot sensitivities wherever practicable. We have been careful not to dedicate the Bases for NATO use.

Foreign military use of the SBAs has been very limited in the past. The only exception is that American U2 aircraft have operated from Akrotiri for many years in performing a reconnaissance role over the Middle East. This has been done with the knowledge and consent of the Cyprus Government.

/Aircraft



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Aircraft from foreign air forces have occasionally been permitted to use Akrotiri as a staging point. But foreign combat aircraft have never been stationed at Akrotiri. The basing of foreign military aircraft there in readiness for action over the Lebanon would represent a very significant departure from previous practice.

The sensitivity of the Cyprus Government about foreign military use of the SBAs was demonstrated on 7 September when the Cyprus Foreign Minister mentioned to the Foreign Secretary the use of the SBAs by the Americans in support of their forces in the Lebanon. Mr Rolandis said that he had been under pressure to object to this use of the SBAs by the Americans but had resisted. Despite the carefully low key approach his remarks were a clear warning of Cypriot sensitivities. Rolandis plainly implied that the Cypriots were worried by what they saw as the prospect of the island being dragged into the Middle East conflict through use of the SBAs. Our own use of the SBAs, including the stationing of 6 Buccaneers there, has already aroused considerable press interest. So far Cypriot press coverage gives the impression of a general grudging acceptance of our action, except for the Communists who have used the opportunity to denounce our presence in the Bases and who are to organise a demonstration on 16 September. In view of their non-aligned status, the Cypriots would undoubtedly be very concerned about greater use by NATO allies of facilities on the island.

If faced with a formal request from any of our allies, we would clearly need to consider each one on its merits, bearing in mind the foregoing considerations and the situation in the Lebanon at the time. Clearly we would wish to be as helpful as possible to Allies and fellow contributors to the MNF. But against this we must also give full weight to Cypriot sensitivities. Our long-term interests in the SBAs, are not worth putting at risk, unless vital interests are at stake. There is also a risk that agreeing to one request (e.g. from the Italians) would be all too likely to prove to be the thin end of the wedge. We have already had a low level request from the Lebanese to move some of their Hawker aircraft to Akrotiri.

I understand that this problem was raised briefly in Cabinet this morning. The Foreign Secretary has looked very carefully at all the aspects. Despite wishing to be as helpful as possible to the Italians, he has concluded that we would have to turn down any formal request to station aircraft at Akrotiri for operational use in the Lebanon. If we can, it would be best to ensure that they do not make a formal request which we then have to reject. In either case the Foreign Secretary believes that we should soften the blow

/by offering

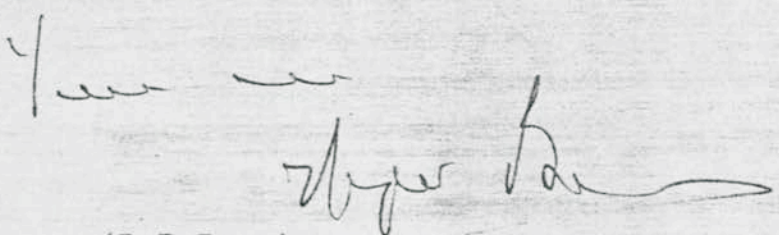


by offering to examine alternative ways in which the Italians could be sure of adequate air support for their contingent. We might be able to provide help ourselves and the Americans have already offered their support to other MNF contingents.

Use of Akrotiri by the Italians may well come up when Sr Craxi has talks with the Prime Minister on 16 September, and the Foreign Secretary will be having a separate meeting with Sr Andreotti before that. Sir Geoffrey considers that if the Italians then make a formal request to use Akrotiri we should frankly outline the difficulties and be strongly discouraging. So as not to reject a formal request outright we should agree to examine it urgently but without holding out hopes of a favourable decision. At the same time we should suggest that we both look in detail at the alternatives. We will prepare briefing accordingly.

There is a distinction between the Italian idea of basing aircraft at Akrotiri and possible further use of the SBAs by the Americans purely for staging purposes. The Americans appear to have in mind the use of Akrotiri for the re-supply of arms and ammunition not only for American forces but also, possibly, for the Lebanese Army. There may be occasions when such use of the SBAs is vital in the interest of the MNF and the Western position in the Lebanon. In such cases the Foreign Secretary believes we should be prepared to agree to limited use of the SBAs, taking care to explain the situation to the Cypriots. But we must make sure that such use of the SBAs is exceptional and that requests do not proliferate. This means ensuring in advance that the Americans understand Cypriot sensitivities and discouraging them from making any request except when it is absolutely essential to use the SBAs and no viable alternative exists.

I am copying this letter to John Coles (No 10) and PS/ Sir Robert Armstrong (Cabinet Office).


 (R B Bone)
Private Secretary

PS/Secretary of State for Defence



MO 3/7/4

Prime Minister

A.S.C. 16/7

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY

CYPRUS AND THE LEBANON

I have seen your Private Secretary's letter of 15th September and we discussed it on the telephone this morning. Since you wrote there have been three major developments: the emergency landing by two Lebanese Hunters at RAF Akrotiri; a request by the Lebanese to land further aircraft at Akrotiri to avoid their being damaged on the ground in the Lebanon; and a formal request from the Italians to station aircraft at Akrotiri for possible operational use in the Lebanon.

2. To deal first with the Italian request I am, as I told you this morning, very much aware of the importance of our facilities in Cyprus and the need not to put our relations with the Cypriot Government or the long-term future of the SBAs at risk. On the other hand I attach very considerable weight to the fact that the Italians are our partners in the MNF whose forces are facing exactly the same unpleasant and dangerous conditions as BRITFORLEB. It is also the case that they have already been very helpful to us in terms of rapidly agreeing overflying rights for our aircraft en route to Cyprus; and that we have wider NATO interests at stake for example over the EH 101 helicopter and GLCM basing. I feel that in the circumstances a refusal to help the Italians simply would not be understood in Rome - nor would it be easily understood by us if a British request was refused in similar circumstances. Also I am not persuaded that agreement to this request is likely to be the "thin end of the wedge"; the US and France already have carriers off the Lebanon and therefore do not need to use Cyprus as an operational



base. While the Cyprus Government may be sensitive on this issue, our position is a defensible one, and it seems most unlikely that temporary use of Akrotiri by the Italians in the unique circumstances of the deployment of the MNF in Lebanon will have a long term effect on our relations with the Cypriots.

3. In this connection you told me that, in the course of conversations this morning, the Italians had said that their contacts with the Cypriot Government indicated that the Cypriots would in fact raise no objections to the use by Italian aircraft of the Sovereign Base Areas. You indicated that the FCO were checking whether this was the case and I made the point that the longer we take over any favourable decision the less credit we shall obtain for it. I would therefore hope that, if the response from Cyprus bears out the Italian interpretation, we could pass a favourable response to the Italians before the weekend. Even if Cypriot attitudes turn out to be less positive I believe that we should still agree the Italian request.

4. On the other hand the request from the Lebanese Government is in a somewhat different category. We allowed the two Hunters to land in an emergency; they are now being repaired and will be allowed to leave (with instructions not to mount an operational attack) as soon as possible. We would, on humanitarian grounds, clearly have to accede to any further requests of this kind. But I do not think we should allow the Lebanese unrestricted use of Akrotiri. If we did so the alternatives would be either simply to allow them to park the aircraft for the duration of the hostilities (which could face us with difficult security problems and would probably be unacceptable to the Lebanese) or to permit them to fly in and out whenever the situation on the ground became dangerous. In the latter case, even if we stipulated that no operational missions could be flown from Akrotiri, it would be difficult to distinguish between a direct operation mounted from Cyprus and a flight to a strip in Lebanon followed by an attack mission. This would be seen as associating us



very closely with the internal Lebanese conflict, and for this reason I believe that we should turn down the Lebanese request.

5. Finally on the question of assistance to the Americans, I agree the line proposed in the penultimate paragraph of your Private Secretary's letter. I would be very much opposed to the US using the SBAs for the supply of arms and ammunition to the Lebanese army.

6. I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

[Handwritten signature]

Ministry of Defence
16th September 1983

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FM BEIRUT 161000Z SEP 83

TO FLASH F.C.O.

TELEGRAM NUMBER 516 OF 16 SEPTEMBER 1983

AND TO FLASH MODUK

INFO FLASH AHQ CYPRUS, CBFC, NICOSIA.

mb

head in bull.

MODUK FOR D511

LEBANON/CYPRUS: HUNTER AIRCRAFT.

1. WE HAVE CONFIRMATION FROM AHQ CYPRUS THAT TWO LEBANESE AIRFORCE HUNTER AIRCRAFT AND A PUMA HELICOPTER LANDED AT RAF AKROTIRI EARLY 16 SEP.
2. ONE HUNTER HAS A DAMAGED NOSE WHEEL AND THE OTHER ONE WAS SHORT OF FUEL BUT IS SERVICEABLE. THEY MAY HAVE TAKEN PART IN A HUNTER ATTACK THAT WAS CARRIED OUT EARLY 16 SEP IN SUPPORT OF THE LEBANESE ARMY IN THE MOUNTAINS EAST OF BEIRUT.
3. THE PUMA HAS LEFT AKROTIRI FOR LEBANON. WE HAVE ASKED AHQ CYPRUS TO HOLD THE HUNTERS AT AKROTIRI UNTIL THEY RECEIVE YOUR INSTRUCTIONS.
4. US AMBASSADOR HAS, ON INSTRUCTIONS, REQUESTED THE CHARGE THAT WE ALLOW THE AIRCRAFT TO TAKE OFF FOR AKROTIRI AND RETURN TO LEBANON.
5. IF THE HUNTERS LEAVE AKROTIRI THE LEBANESE WOULD CERTAINLY WISH THEM TO RETURN TO A TEMPORARY AIRSTRIP NEAR BYBLOS WHICH THEY OCCUPIED ON 16 SEP. THEY MIGHT WELL THEN CARRY OUT FURTHER OPERATIONAL SORTIES.
6. WE HAVE JUST BEEN INFORMED THAT ANOTHER PUMA HAS FLOWN TO AKROTIRI TO REPAIR THE DAMAGED AIRCRAFT. WE HAVE OFFICIALLY REQUESTED THE LEBANON NOT TO MAKE ANY MORE UNAUTHORISED FLIGHTS THERE.

Flw confirm this. No need to put to pm.

1-5. W/L 2/9

I all want they have now been given permission to return

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 MR WRIGHT
 MR CARTLEDGE
 MR EGERTON
 MR STREETON

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 MR GOODALL) CABINET OFFICE
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FM FCO 191800Z SEP 83

TO IMMEDIATE THE HAGUE

TELEGRAM NUMBER 113 OF 19 SEPTEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK (FOR PRIVATE OFFICE AND DS11), UKREP BRUSSELS
(FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY).

FOLLOWING FOR COLES FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY/FOREIGN AND
COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY

ITALIAN REQUEST TO USE AKROTIRI

1. AS YOU KNOW, WHEN CRAXI AND ANDREOTTI WERE HERE ON
16 SEPTEMBER THEY FORMALLY REQUESTED OUR PERMISSION TO STATION
4-6 F104'S AT AKROTIRI TO SUPPORT THEIR CONTINGENT WITH THE
MNF. THEY SAID AT THE TIME THAT THEY HAD CONSULTED THE CYPRUS
GOVERNMENT INFORMALLY AND THAT THE LATTER HAD RAISED NO
OBJECTION. THE ITALIANS HAVE RETURNED TO THE CHARGE IN LONDON
TODAY.

2. WE HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING URGENTLY HOW TO RESPOND TO THE
ITALIAN REQUEST. AS YOU ARE AWARE, AN ADDITIONAL FACTOR OVER
THE WEEKEND WAS THAT THE CYPRIOTS TOLD US THAT THEY HAD REVERSED THE
VIEW THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED TO THE ITALIANS. (THE ITALIANS ARE
AWARE OF THIS REVERSAL)

THIS HAS NOW BEEN CONFIRMED BY KYPRIANOU AND ROLANDIS. THE
CYPRIOTS NOW SAY THAT, IF WE ACCEPT THE ITALIAN REQUEST, THEY
WOULD HAVE TO EXPRESS PUBLICLY THEIR DISAGREEMENT BECAUSE OF (A)
THEIR ANXIETY NOT TO GET EMBROILED IN INTER-ARAB QUARRELS: AND (B)
THEIR UNHAPPINESS ABOUT ACQUIESCING IN THE USE OF AKROTIRI BY
NON-BRITISH FORCES, WHICH OVERRODE THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF ITALIAN
POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS WITH WHICH OTHERWISE THEY SYMPATHISED.

Hand sent.

DD 18/9

3. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY DISCUSSED OUR RESPONSE TO THE ITALIAN REQUEST WITH MR HESELTINE THIS AFTERNOON. IT IS A DIFFICULT DECISION. THERE ARE COSTS EITHER WAY. THE CYPRUS GOVERNMENT HAVE NOW MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WILL OBJECT PUBLICLY TO USE OF AKROTIRI BY THE ITALIANS. THERE ARE THOSE IN CYPRUS, PARTICULARLY THE SUBSTANTIAL COMMUNIST PARTY WITH WHICH KYPRIANOU HAS AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE, WHO WILL MAKE THE MOST OF SUCH AN OPEN DISAGREEMENT TO FURTHER THEIR CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE BRITISH PRESENCE IN THE BASES. UNWELCOME ATTENTION WILL BE FOCUSED ON THE SBAS AND OUR ACTIVITIES THERE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE REQUEST FOR HELP COMES FROM A FELLOW CONTRIBUTOR TO THE MNF AND A NATO ALLY (ALTHOUGH WE SHALL NOT OF COURSE BE PLAYING UP THE LATTER POINT WITH THE CYPRIOTS). THERE IS NO TREATY RESTRICTION ON HOW WE USE SBAS AND WE MUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO ACT SO AS TO IMPLY THE CONTRARY. IT IS DIFFICULT TO VISUALISE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH A BETTER CASE COULD BE MADE FOR USE OF THE SBAS BY NONE BRITISH FORCES. THE ITALIANS HAVE VERY STRONG HUMANITARIAN REASONS FOR THEIR REQUEST. WE OURSELVES HAVE STATIONED BUCCANEERS AT AKROTIRI. IT IS DIFFICULT TO REFUSE A REQUEST FOR SIMILAR FACILITIES FROM THE ITALIANS AND PUBLIC OPINION IN ITALY COULD BE OUTRAGED IF THE ITALIAN CONTINGENT, ALONE AMONGST CONTRIBUTORS TO THE MNF, HAD NO NATIONAL AIR COVER OF ITS OWN BECAUSE WE HAD REFUSED PERMISSION TO USE ONE OF OUR BASES, PARTICULARLY IF THE ITALIANS COULD BE SAID TO HAVE SUFFERED CASUALTIES AS A RESULT. NOR DO WE THINK THAT THE ITALIANS WOULD FIND IT POSSIBLE TO MEET THEIR NEEDS IN ANOTHER WAY.

4. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY AND MR HESELTINE TOOK THE VIEW THAT THE DIFFICULTIES LIKELY TO BE CREATED BY THE ATTITUDE OF THE CYPRIOTS WERE OUTWEIGHED BY THE IMPORTANCE OF HELPING AN ALLY AND BEING SEEN TO DO SO. SUBJECT TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S VIEW THEY CONCLUDED THAT WE SHOULD AGREE TO MEET THE ITALIAN REQUEST. IN DOING SO WE SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE ITALIAN AIRCRAFT ARE TO USE AKROTIRI ONLY FOR THE DIRECT DEFENCE OF THEIR MNF CONTINGENT IN ITS PRESENT ROLE. WE SHOULD ALSO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO LIMIT THE RISKS OF AN OPEN CONFRONTATION WITH THE CYPRUS GOVERNMENT ON THE ISSUE. WE SHOULD EXPLAIN TO THE CYPRIOTS THE STRICTLY LIMITED ROLE OF THE MNF AND THAT IT HAS NO MANDATE TO GET INVOLVED IN INTERNAL FIGHTING IN THE LEBANON. BOTH OUR CONTINGENT AND THE ITALIAN ONE WOULD ONLY USE FORCE IN SELF-DEFENCE. WE WOULD ALSO STRESS THE HUMANITARIAN AND PEACEKEEPING ASPECTS. MR STANLEY IS AT PRESENT VISITING THE BRITISH CONTINGENT TO THE MNF AND ABOUT TO RETURN THROUGH CYPRUS. THE MOD ARE SEEING WHETHER HE CAN REMAIN IN CYPRUS FOR AN EXTRA DAY SO THAT HE CAN PERSONALLY EXPLAIN OUR DECISION AND THE REASONS FOR IT TO CYPRIOT MINISTERS.

5. IN ADDITION WE SHOULD PROPOSE TO MAKE CLEAR TO THE ITALIANS THAT THIS HAS BEEN A DIFFICULT AND POTENTIALLY COSTLY DECISION FOR US, AND THAT WE EXPECT THEM TO EXPLAIN TO THE CYPRIOTS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL THE LIMITED ROLE OF THEIR MNF CONTINGENT: THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF PROVIDING AIR COVER: AND THE PURELY DEFENSIVE WAY IN WHICH THEIR F104S WILL BE USED. WE HOPE TO THE ITALIANS WILL THEN BE ABLE TO LIMIT THE CYPRIOT REACTION.

6. IF THE PRIME MINISTER IS CONTENT, WE PROPOSE TO SEND INSTRUCTIONS TOMORROW MORNING TO ROME AND NICOSIA.

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TO IMMEDIATE NICOSIA

TELEGRAM NUMBER 162 OF 20 SEPTEMBER 1983

AND TO IMMEDIATE DESKBY 201700Z ROME

INFO IMMEDIATE UKREP BRUSSELS (FOR SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTY),

BEIRUT, MODUK, CBFC

ITALIAN USE OF AKROTIRI: PRESS LINE

1. WE AND MOD WILL DRAW ON THE FOLLOWING MATERIAL ON THE RECORD AS NECESSARY:

(A) THE ITALIAN CONTINGENT TO THE MULTI NATIONAL FORCE IN BEIRUT AT PRESENT DEPENDS UPON DEFENSIVE AIR COVER PROVIDED BY OTHER NATIONAL CONTRIBUTORS TO THE MNF. THE ITALIANS WOULD OBVIOUSLY PREFER TO BE ABLE TO CALL UPON THEIR OWN AIRCRAFT SHOULD THE NEED ARISE. THE BRITISH, FRENCH AND OF COURSE THE AMERICAN CONTINGENTS ALL ALREADY HAVE THE FACILITY. FOLLOWING A REQUEST FROM THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT, MINISTERS HAVE AGREED TO THE DEPLOYMENT TO RAF AKROTIRI OF UP TO SIX ITALIAN AIR FORCE F104 AIRCRAFT. THIS SHOULD FULLY SATISFY THE ITALIAN REQUIREMENT. BOTH THE ITALIAN AND CYPRUS GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF THE DECISION.

(B) WE HAVE AGREED TO THIS REQUEST IN THE LIGHT OF THE CLEAR NEED OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ITS CONTINGENT IN THE MULTI NATIONAL FORCE IN THE LEBANON WITH DEFENSIVE AIR COVER. ALL OTHER CONTINGENTS ALREADY HAVE AIR COVER. IT IS CLEARLY RIGHT FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS THAT THE ITALIANS TOO SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE DEFENSIVE COVER.

(C) THE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT TO BE DEPLOYED (UP TO SIX) WILL BE THE MINIMUM NECESSARY TO PROVIDE THE FURTHER PROTECTION WHICH THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS NECESSARY FOR ITS CONTINGENT.

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(D) THE ROLE OF THE AIRCRAFT IS ENTIRELY FOR THE SELF-DEFENCE OF THE ITALIAN CONTINGENT. THERE ARE NO PLANS TO USE THEM IN DIRECT SUPPORT OF THE LEBANESE ARMED FORCES.

(E) (IF PRESSED) QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE MILITARY USE OF THE SOVEREIGN BASE AREAS ARE ENTIRELY A MATTER FOR HMG. (IF PRESSED) THE CYPRUS GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN INFORMED OF THIS DEPLOYMENT AS A MATTER OF COURTESY. (IF ASKED ABOUT THE CYPRUS GOVERNMENT'S REACTION) THAT IS FOR THEM TO SAY.

(F) THERE ARE NO PLANS AT PRESENT TO DEPLOY FURTHER AIRCRAFT TO RAF AKROTIRI.

2. WE SHALL ALSO DRAW AS REQUIRED ON THE FOLLOWING SUPPLEMENTARIES:

Q. HOW MANY AIRCRAFT?

A. UP TO SIX

Q. WHEN TO ARRIVE?

A. AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Q. HOW LONG TO STAY?

A. AS LONG AS AGREED TO BE NECESSARY.

Q. UNDER WHOSE CONTROL?

A. THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT.

Q. CONSTRAINTS PLACED ON USE?

A. AGREEMENT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO A REQUEST TO DEPLOY THE AIRCRAFT FOR THE SELF DEFENCE OF THE ITALIAN CONTINGENT OF THE MNF. NO QUESTION OF SUPPORTING LAF

Q. WHY NOT CONTINUE TO USE AMERICAN/BRITISH/FRENCH AIR COVER?

A. MATTER FOR ITALIANS TO DECIDE. BUT CLEARLY MORE DESIRABLE FOR THEM TO HAVE NATIONAL COVER FOR NATIONAL CONTINGENT IN SAME WAY AS OTHER CONTINGENTS.

3. WE SHALL ALSO SAY UNATTRIBUTALY IF NECESSARY THAT THERE IS A CLEAR POLITICAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE ITS CONTINGENT WITH A LEVEL OF PROTECTION COMPARABLE TO THAT ALREADY AVAILABLE TO OTHER CONTINGENTS. THE ITALIANS HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY HELPFUL TO THE UK IS ASSISTING THE RECENT RAPID DEPLOYMENT TO AKROTIRI OF RAF AIRCRAFT (CHINOOKS AND BUCCANEERS).

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TO FLASH ROME

TELEGRAM NUMBER 256 OF 20 SEPTEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE NICOSIA, BEIRUT, WASHINGTON, PARIS, UKDEL NATO,
UKMIS NEW YORK, MODUK, CBFC

MY TELS NO 250 AND 251: ITALIAN REQUEST TO USE RAF AKROTIRI

1. MINISTERS HAVE GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE ITALIAN REQUEST. THE DECISION IS A DIFFICULT ONE, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THE LATEST INFORMATION ABOUT THE ATTITUDE OF THE CYPRUS GOVERNMENT (NICOSIA TELS NUMBER 206 AND 207). NEVERTHELESS MINISTERS ARE IMPRESSED BY THE NEED TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO HELP A FELLOW CONTRIBUTOR TO THE MNF AND A NATO ALLY IN WHAT IS CLEARLY A STRONG HUMANITARIAN AND POLITICAL NEED TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE AIR COVER FOR THEIR MNF CONTINGENT. FURTHERMORE, WE CAN SEE NO ALTERNATIVE WAY IN WHICH THE ITALIANS COULD OBTAIN AIR COVER WHICH THEY WOULD FIND SATISFACTORY. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, MINISTERS HAVE DECIDED TO AGREE TO THE ITALIAN REQUEST SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS (SEE BELOW).

2. YOU SHOULD INFORM ANDREOTTI URGENTLY OF THIS DECISION. IN DOING SO YOU SHOULD POINT OUT THAT WE HAVE BEEN ANXIOUS TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO HELP THE ITALIANS TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE COVER FOR THEIR FORCES. BUT THEY SHOULD REALISE THAT OUR DECISION HAS NOT BEEN AN EASY ONE AND COULD PROVE COSTLY BOTH FOR OURSELVES AND WESTERN INTERESTS IN CYPRUS. THEY WILL KNOW THAT THE CYPRIOTS (WITH THE APPROVAL OF KYPRIANOU) HAVE NOW SAID THAT THEY ARE UNHAPPY ABOUT THE POSSIBLE USE OF AKROTIRI BY THE ITALIANS AND WOULD HAVE TO EXPRESS THEIR DISAGREEMENT PUBLICLY IF WE GAVE

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PERMISSION. WE HAVE NO TREATY OBLIGATION TO CONSULT THE CYPRIOTS ON USE OF THE SBAS. BUT POLITICAL COMMONSENSE DICTATES THAT WE SHOULD KEEP TO A MINIMUM ANY DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN US OVER USE OF THE BASES. WE LOOK TO THE ITALIANS TO EXPLAIN AT THE HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVEL (IE PRIME MINISTER OR FOREIGN MINISTER) THE ABSOLUTE POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN NECESSITY FOR THEIR MNF CONTINGENT IN THE LEBANON TO HAVE ACCESS TO AIR SUPPORT. THEY SHOULD MAKE CLEAR TO THE CYPRIOTS THE LIMITED NATURE OF THEIR PRESENCE AND SEEK THEIR UNDERSTANDING. BUT THEY SHOULD ALSO MAKE CLEAR THAT PUBLIC CRITICISM OF ITALIAN USE OF AKROTIRI FOR THIS PURPOSE WOULD NOT BE COMPREHENSIBLE TO ITALIAN PUBLIC OPINION AND WOULD INEVITABLY HAVE AN EFFECT ON CYPRIOT/ITALIAN RELATIONS.

3. YOU SHOULD TELL THE ITALIANS THAT OUR AGREEMENT TO THE STATIONING OF 4-6 F104S AT AKROTIRI IS ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE SAME RESTRAINTS AS OUR OWN AIRCRAFT, IE THEY WILL ONLY BE USED IN DIRECT DEFENCE OF THE ITALIAN MNF CONTINGENT WITH THE MINIMUM LEVEL OF COVER JUDGED NECESSARY: THEY WILL NOT BE USED IN DIRECT SUPPORT OF LEBANESE ARMED FORCES.
4. FINALLY, YOU SHOULD SAY THAT DETAILS CONCERNING THE DEPLOYMENT AND THE STATIONING OF AIRCRAFT AT AKROTIRI SHOULD BE SORTED OUT THROUGH MILITARY CHANNELS.
5. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO KNOW HOW MANY AIRCRAFT WILL BE STATIONED AND THE TIMING OF ANY ITALIAN ANNOUNCEMENT.

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TO IMMEDIATE NICOSIA

TELEGRAM NUMBER 161 OF 20 SEPTEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE ROME, BEIRUT, WASHINGTON, PARIS, UKDEL NATO,

UKMIS NEW YORK, MODUK, CBFC

YOUR TELS NO 206 AND 207 AND MY TELNO 256 TO ROME: ITALIAN
REQUEST TO USE RAF AKROTIRI

1. YOU SHOULD SEEK AN URGENT APPOINTMENT WITH ROLANDIS TO EXPLAIN
TO HIM THE MINISTERIAL DECISION ON THE ITALIAN REQUEST TO STATION
AIRCRAFT AT AKROTIRI IN SUPPORT OF THEIR MNF CONTINGENT.

2. YOU SHOULD SAY THAT WE HAVE TAKEN FULLY INTO ACCOUNT CYPRIOT
VIEWS. BUT WE HAVE ALSO HAD TO CONSIDER THE IMPERATIVE HUMANITAR-
IAN AND POLITICAL NEED FOR THE ITALIANS TO PROVIDE DEFENSIVE COVER
FOR THEIR MNF CONTINGENT DURING THIS DIFFICULT STAGE OF THE
LEBANESE CONFLICT. THE ITALIANS THEMSELVES WILL DOUBTLESS BE MAK-
ING THESE CONSIDERATIONS CLEAR TO THE CYPRIOTS.

3. YOU SHOULD EMPHASISE THAT THE ITALIAN CONTINGENT TO THE MNF,
LIKE OUR OWN, IS IN LEBANON PURELY TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE
LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. IT IS NO PART OF ITS MANDATE TO GET INVOLVED
IN INTERNAL FIGHTING IN THE LEBANON. WE AND OTHER EUROPEAN MNF
CONTRIBUTORS ARE DOING ALL WE CAN IN SUPPORT OF US/SAUDI EFFORTS
TO SECURE A CEASEFIRE AND A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. THE ITALIANS,
LIKE US, WILL ONLY USE FORCE IN SELF-DEFENCE AND, EVEN THEN, WILL
RESPOND WITH THE MINIMUM DETERRENT NECESSARY.

4. YOU SHOULD ADD THAT I HAVE HAD IN MIND MY CONVERSATION WITH
ROLANDIS IN MADRID. (MY TELNO 142, NOT TO ALL). I FULLY
UNDERSTAND THE CYPRIOT CONCERNS ABOUT THE ISLAND GETTING DRAGGED

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INTO THE LEBANON CONFLICT. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE PURELY DEFENSIVE ROLE BEING PLAYED BY BOTH OUR OWN AND THE ITALIAN AIRCRAFT AT AKROTIRI NEED NOT ADD TO CYPRIOT CONCERNS. YOU SHOULD ADD THAT I HOPE THE CYPRUS GOVERNMENT WILL NOT FIND IT NECESSARY TO TAKE ISSUE PUBLICLY WITH THE STATIONING OF ITALIAN AIRCRAFT.

5. IF NECESSARY YOU SHOULD REFUTE ANY SUGGESTION THAT THERE ARE LIMITATIONS, EITHER TREATY OR OTHERWISE, ON NON-BRITISH MILITARY USE OF THE SBAS.

6. WE ARE TELEGRAPHING SEPARATELY ON THE PRESS LINE WE PROPOSE TO TAKE WHEN THE NEWS BREAKS.

HOWE

MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)

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FM THE HAGUE 200030Z SEP 83
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 259 OF 20 SEPTEMBER
INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK (FOR PRIVATE OFFICE AND DS 11) AND UKREP
BRUSSELS (FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY)

YOUR TELNO 113: ITALIAN REQUEST TO USE AKROTIRI.

FOR PS TO THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY FROM COLES.

THE PRIME MINISTER IS CONTENT WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
DEFENCE.

MANSFIELD

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

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INFO IMMEDIATE NICOSIA WASHINGTON UKMIS NEW YORK MODUK
BRITFORLEB CBFC AND BEHRUT

INFO PRIORITY UKDEL NATO AND PARIS

YRTELNO 256: ITALIAN USE OF RAF AKROTIRI

1. I GAVE YOUR ANSWER TO ANDREOTTI IMMEDIATELY YOUR TELEGRAM
ARRIVED. HE CAME OUT OF A JOINT MEETING OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND DEFENCE COMMITTEES IN THE SENATE TO RECEIVE ME. I SPOKE
AS INSTRUCTED AND UNDERTOOK TO WRITE A CONFIRMING LETTER
THIS AFTERNOON.

2. ANDREOTTI WAS GRATEFUL. HE ASKED WHETHER WE HAD VIEWS
ABOUT THE FORM OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNICATION TO THE CYPRIOTS:
SHOULD IT BE INFORMAL OR INCORPORATED IN A WRITTEN NOTE? I SAID
THAT THIS WAS FOR THE ITALIANS TO JUDGE, BUT MY PERSONAL PRE-
FERENCE WOULD BE FOR THE MORE INFORMAL COMMUNICATION.

3. WE WILL REMAIN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE ITALIANS AND
WILL REPORT FURTHER AS SOON AS WE HEAR HOW THEY GET ON.

BRIDGES

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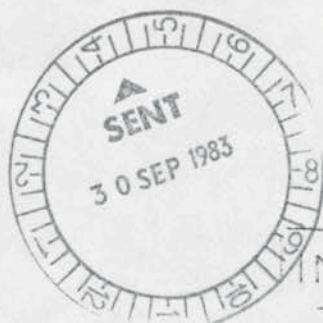
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PS
PS/ADY YOUNG
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INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON (FOR SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTY), NICOSIA

INFO PRIORITY MODUK (FOR DS 11) CBFC AND ATHENS

YRTEL U/N DTG 281630Z SEP 83

ITALIAN USE OF AKROTIRI

1. THANK YOU FOR THESE INSTRUCTIONS. I CALLED ON THE SECRETARY GENERAL AT THE MFA ON SEPTEMBER 29 AND SPOKE ACCORDINGLY. I SAID THAT OUR OFFER OF THE USE OF AKROTIRI STILL STOOD, BUT IT SEEMED TO US THAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES HAD CHANGED SOMEWHAT. WE HAD A JOINT INTEREST IN NOT DOING ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT APPEAR TO BE AT VARIANCE WITH THE COMMITMENT TO DE-ESCALATION IN LEBANON, NOR DID WE WANT TO SHOW LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE CEASEFIRE. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ITALIAN VIEWS AND INTENTIONS.
2. MALFATTA SAID THAT HE BELIEVED CURRENT POLICY HERE TO BE THAT THE F104S WOULD NOT BE DEPLOYED TO AKROTIRI SO LONG AS THE TRUCE HELD. BUT HE WOULD CONFIRM THIS WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE.
3. MALFATTA TELEPHONED TODAY TO SAY THAT SPADOLINI AGREES THAT THIS IS THE CURRENT POSITION. BUT IF HOSTILITIES START AGAIN IN LEBANON, HE BELIEVED ITALY WOULD WISH TO DEPLOY THEIR AIRCRAFT, IN WHICH CASE THEY WOULD CONTACT US AGAIN.
4. NEITHER HE NOR I MENTIONED THE PROBLEM OF STAGING THROUGH GREEK TERRITORY (ATHENS TELNO 478) BUT THIS MAY HAVE A BEARING ON THE ITALIAN ATTITUDE.

BRIDGES

DWF GF 12/30

LHC NR 317/30

OO FCO

OO WASHINGTON

OO NICOSIA

PP PARIS

PP MODUK

PP CBFC

PP ATHENS