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DESKBY 031100Z F C O AND DAMASCUS

FM BEIRUT 030935Z DEC 83

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 692 OF 3 DECEMBER 1983

AND TO IMMEDIATE DAMASCUS

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK

INFO ROUTINE WASHINGTON, PARIS, ROME, TEL AVIV

INFO SAVING BRITFORLEB

FIRING AT BRITFORLEB

1. DURING THE COURSE OF LOCALISED EXCHANGES OF FIRE LAST NIGHT BETWEEN THE RIVAL GROUPINGS BRITFORLEB ITSELF CAME UNDER FIRE. THEY ARE REPORTING DETAILS SEPARATELY TO MOD. BRIEFLY THEY SUSTAINED AT LEAST 3 RPG HITS AND SIX NEAR MISSES: AND CONSIDERABLE 0.5 CALIBRE MACHINE GUN FIRE ON THEIR BUILDING AND VEHICLE PARK. ONE SOLDIER WAS LIGHTLY WOUNDED (GRAZED FOREHEAD). A LANDROVER WAS BURNT OUT. WATER TANKS AND RADIO EQUIPMENT WERE DAMAGED.

2. COMMANDER BRITFORLEB IS CLEAR THAT THE FIRE WAS DELIBERATELY AIMED AT BRITFORLEB FROM PSP AND AMAL POSITIONS. BUT HE BELIEVES THAT THIS WAS ON LOCAL INITIATIVE NOT (REPEAT NOT) ON THE ORDERS OF THE AMAL AND PSP ORGANISATIONS AS SUCH. IN THAT CASE MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE FIRE WOULD HAVE BEEN DELIVERED.

3. I AM SURE THAT WE MUST PROTEST TO AMAL AND PSP AND HAVE DISCUSSED THIS WITH COMD BRITFORLEB. HE WILL PROTEST VIA THE CEASE-FIRE COMMITTEE MACHINERY. BUT IT IS NOT YET CERTAIN THAT THIS WILL REGISTER EFFECTIVELY SINCE THERE IS NO MEETING OF THE CEASEFIRE COMMITTEE AT THE BANK UNTIL MONDAY. WE ARE PROTESTING ON EMBASSY CHANNELS TO PSP AND AMAL. WE ARE TAKING THE LINE THAT THE EVENTS IN PARA ONE ARE UNACCEPTABLE. THEY CONSTITUTE A THREAT TO BRITFORLEBS ABILITY TO CARRY OUT ITS ROLE. THEY THUS JEOPARDIZE THE CEASEFIRE TALKS. AMAL AND PSP MUST INVESTIGATE TO SEE WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE. WE NEED AN ASSURANCE THAT NOTHING LIKE THIS WILL HAPPEN AGAIN.

4. WE HAVE ALREADY MANAGED TO CONTACT NABIH BERRI WHO SAID IT MUST HAVE BEEN A MISTAKE. HE WAS VERY MUCH AWARE OF THE VITAL JOB BRITFORLEB WAS DOING. HE HAS UNDERTAKEN TO INVESTIGATE. WE HAVE ARRANGED TO SPEAK TO MOHSEN DALLOUL (VICE PRESIDENT OF PSP) AT 1230 LOCAL.

5. GRATEFUL IF DAMASCUS COULD MAKE APPROPRIATE REPRESENTATIONS TO JUMBLATT (MR LUCE MAY CARE TO ADD HIS PERSONAL WEIGHT TO THIS: FCO TELNO 511 REFERS).

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6. WE SHALL REFER PRESS ENQUIRIES TO BRITFORLEB IN THE FIRST INSTANCE. I HAVE AGREED WITH COMD BRITFORLEB THAT IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO CONFIRM THAT THERE HAS BEEN DAMAGE (EG LOSS OF LAND-ROVER), BUT HE WILL SAY THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO CASUALTIES EXCEPT FOR ONE SOLDIER GRAZED. WE WILL TAKE THE GENERAL LINE THAT BRITFORLEB WAS THE VICTIM OF A FIREFIGHT BETWEEN THE RIVAL FACTIONS. IF PRESSED HE WILL ADMIT THAT INDIVIDUALS MAY HAVE DIRECTED FIRE AT BRITFORLEB BUT SAY THAT HE DOES NOT (NOT) BELIEVE THAT BRITFORLEB WAS DELIBERATELY ATTACKED BY AMAL OR PSP AS SUCH: WE SHALL CONFIRM IF ASKED THAT WE ARE IN URGENT TOUCH WITH AMAL AND PSP, THAT WE HAVE UNDERLINED THE GRAVITY OF THIS INCIDENT AND ASKED FOR AN ASSURANCE THAT THERE WILL BE NO REPETITION.)

MIERS
BT

MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)

LIMITED
NENAD
MED
DEFENCE DEPT
PUSD
NEWS DEPT
UND
NAD
WED
SED
ECD(E)
FINANCE DEPT
PROTOCOL DEPT
PS

PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR LUCE
PS/PUS
SIR J BULLARD
SIR J LEAHY
MR WRIGHT
MR CARTLEDGE
MR MACINNES
MR ADAMS
MR EGERTON
MR JENKINS

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Press Line

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MIERS

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