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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

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SECRET

4739 - 1

GRS 401
SECRET
DESKBY BEIRUT 050600Z
FROM FCO 041716Z DEC 833
TO FLASH ATHENS
TELEGRAM NUMBER 559 OF 4 DECEMBER
INFO FLASH WASHINGTON, DAMASCUS (FOR MR LUCE)
IMMEDIATE BEIRUT, PARIS, ROME,
TEL AVIV, UKMIS NEW YORK, UKDEL NAO, MODUK (PS)
FOLLOWING FOR PRIME MINISTER FROM S/STATE FOR DEFENCE
FCO TELNO 557: LEBANON

per

1. I SPOKE TO CASPAR WEINBERGER THIS AFTERNOON ON THE US EMBASSY'S VERY INFERIOR SECURE LINE TO PARIS. IN REPLY TO MY DETAILED QUESTIONS HE REPLIED AS FOLLOWS:
 - A. THERE HAD BEEN NO (NO) PENETRATION OF SYRIAN AIRSPACE YESTERDAY (3 DECEMBER) OR TODAY BY US AIRCRAFT:
 - B. YESTERDAY'S FLIGHTS DID NOT REPRESENT ANY INCREASE IN THE LEVEL OF US RECONNAISSANCE OVER SYRIAN-HELD LEBANESE TERRITORY:
 - C. THERE WOULD BE NO (NO) FURTHER US ACTION IN RETALIATION FOR PAST EVENTS: BUT IF THERE WERE TO BE FRESH SYRIAN ATTACKS ON US RECONNAISSANCE PLANES IN FUTURE, THEN THE US RULES OF ENGAGEMENT WOULD ENTITLE THEM TO HIT BACK, AND THE PRESUMPTION WAS THAT THEY MIGHT:
 - D. WEINBERGER DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE SYRIANS COULD HAVE MISTAKEN US RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT YESTERDAY FOR ISRAELI PLANES, WHICH HAD MOUNTED SEPARATE AND EARLIER ATTACKS:
 - E.

2. I TOLD WEINBERGER THAT TWO SPECIFIC ISSUES WERE OF IMMEDIATE CONCERN TO US, VIZ THAT:
 - I. THE PRESENT SERIES OF ATTACKS IN LEBANON COULD ESCALATE

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FURTHER: AND

II. THOUGH WE UNDERSTOOD HIS POINT ABOUT US ROE PERMITTING COUNTER-RETALIATION IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, WE HAD NOT (NOT) BEEN INFORMED OF THIS MORNING'S ATTACK BY US PLANES ON THREE SYRIAN POSITIONS UNTIL A FEW MINUTES BEFORE IT OCCURRED. COULD HE COMMENT ON THIS QUERY.

3. AT THIS POINT RECEPTION ON THE PHONE BECAME HOPELESS AND W AGREED TO PURSUE THE POINTS IN BRUSSELS ON 7 DECEMBER.

4. I HAVE NOTHING AT THIS STAGE TO ADD TO THE ADVICE I SENT YOU THIS MORNING. BUT I THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE THE ABOVE CLARIFICATIONS FROM A PRIME US SOURCE. WE SHALL LOOK FOR ANY COLLATERAL FROM OUR OWN SOURCES ABOUT THE ALLEGED GENERAL ORDER TO SYRIAN GROUND FORCES.

HOWE
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MIDDLE EAST

STANDARD DISTRIBUTION

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ZZ ATHENS

ZZ DAMASCUS

GRS 92

SECRET

FM F C O 041326 DEC 83

TO FLASH ATHENS

TELERGAM NUMBER 556 OF 04 DECEMBER 1983

INFO FLASH DAMASCUS.

FOLLOWING FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY FROM LEAHY

WE HAVE HELD A SERIES OF MEETINGS THIS MORNING ON THE US AIR
ATTACKS IN LEBANON

WITH MR HESELTINE, FIELD MARSHALL SIR EDWIN BRAMALL, EGERTON
AND OTHERS, AND I HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE PUS.

WE ALSO SET UP A SECURE CONFERENCE WITH MR LUCE IN DAMASCUS,
AND MR HESELTINE HAD A USEFUL EXCHANGE WITH HIM.

THE OUTCOME IS CONTAINED IN OUR IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING TEL,
IN THE FORM OF A MESSAGE TO THE P M FROM MR HESELTINE.

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ZZ ATHENS
OO BEIRUT
GRS 123
SECRET
UK EYES ALFA
FM FCO 041326Z DEC 83
TO FLASH ATHENS
TELEGRAM NUMBER 558 OF 4 DECEMBER
INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK, BEIRUT.

FOLLOWING FOR PRIME MINISTER FROM SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE.
DISPOSITION OF FORCES.

- (1) HMS FEARLESS - S OF CYPRUS, ATTEMPTING TO MOVE AWAY FROM US FLEET. POSITIONING ITSELF TO ACT AS DORMITORY IF REQUIRED.
- (2) HMS ACHILLES AND ANDROMEDA JOINING FEARLESS APPROX 1730 BEIRUT TIME (1530Z).
- (3) 2 X PHANTOMS IN CYPRUS ON 30 MIN READINESS FOR CAP OVER FEARLESS.

THREAT TO BRITFORLEB.

COMBRITFORLEB IS SEEKING INFORMATION FROM THE CEASEFIRE COMMITTEE, AND ASSESSING WHETHER HE NEEDS TO EXERCISE DORMITORY OPTION. PRESENT VIEW IS THAT NOT NECESSARY. BRITFORLEB AT FULL STRENGTH ON LAND PLUS ADVANCE PARTY OF REPLACEMENT FORCE. NOW 130 SOLDIERS IN TOTAL.

HOWE

FDW G 017/4

ZZ ATHENS ~~ZZ~~

00 BEIRUT DESKBY 050600Z

00 DAMASCUS

00 RONME

00 TEL AVIV

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IMMEDIATE BEIRUT, PARIS, ROME,

TEL AVIV, UKMIS NEW YORK, UKDEL NATO, MODUK (PS)

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