

GRS 170  
CONFIDENTIAL  
FROM DAMASCUS 100950Z DEC  
TO PRIORITY FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 406 OF 10 DECEMBER 1983  
INFO ROUTINE BEIRUT , WASHINGTON, PARIS, ROME.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

SYRIA/MNF

1. RECENT BRITISH MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS HAVE GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THAT SYRIA FAVOURS THE PRESENCE OF OUR MNF CONTINGENT IN BEIRUT. GUIDANCE TELNO 162 HAS NOW ENSHRINED THIS DOCTRINE IN SAYING (PARA 6) THAT "ALL THE MAIN PARTIES IN LEBANON AND MANY ARAB GOVERNMENTS INCLUDING SYRIA, HAVE RECENTLY CONFIRMED THAT THEY WELCOME OUR CONTINUING PRESENCE IN THE MNF".
2. WITH RESPECT, I DO NOT THINK THAT THIS IS STRICTLY TRUE. IT COMPOUNDS THE RECENT MISUNDERSTANDING OF ANDREOTTI ON A SIMILAR POINT. WHAT THE SYRIANS HAVE TOLD US (AND REPEATED TO MR LUCE ON 4 DECEMBER) IS THAT THEY RECOGNISE THE NEUTRALITY OF OUR CONTINGENT AND WELCOME THE FACT THAT IT HAS NOT BECOME INVOLVED IN THE INTERNECINE QUARRELS OF THE LEBANESE FACTIONS. THIS IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM SAYING THAT THEY WELCOME OUR CONTINGENT'S PRESENCE PER SE (LAST TWO WORDS UNDERLINED). INDEED KHADDAM MADE CLEAR THAT WITHDRAWAL OF THE MNF AS A WHOLE WAS NOW A PRECONDITION OF SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL.
3. NO DOUBT IT SUITS US TO PLAY UP THE DEGREE OF SYRIAN UNDERSTANDING OR OUR MNF ROLE. BUT IT WOULD BE WRONG TO DECEIVE OURSELVES ABOUT THE EXTENT OF THAT UNDERSTANDING.

LUCAS

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

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING ST]

COPIES TO:  
MOD DS11  
MR GOODALL )CABINET  
SIR R ARMSTRONG)OFFICE

SIR P MOORE  
BUCKINGHAM PALACE

THIS TELEGRAM  
WAS NOT  
ADVANCED

**CONFIDENTIAL**