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Prime Minister.

①

MR. COLES ✓

LEBANON

Yes not

If you agree I shall convey this to the Foreign Secretary.  
A-J.C. 16/12

Every time the guns of the USS New Jersey open fire, I become more than ever convinced that the time has come to play the UN card. That is to say, an initiative should be taken designed to replace "all foreign forces" in Lebanon by UN forces/observers pending "national reconciliation" and the creation of a capability by the Lebanese Armed Forces to look after the security of their own country.

I got support from a slightly unexpected quarter yesterday - Brian Urquhart, who has been visiting Britain for his mother's 100th birthday. He was very encouraging. He thought that the Israelis would be much less hostile than they had been, although they would be obliged to continue to harp on the 17 May agreement. Three senior Israelis including Sharon and Kimche, had told him privately in recent weeks that they had changed their view about UNIFIL. They now realised that UNIFIL had done a good job and would like to see its mandate resumed and extended. This is only a straw in the wind, but I doubt if anything like this would have been said even six months ago.

Specifically, I would envisage negotiating an overall package which would bring about the replacement of the MNF by a UN force with additional observers in the Chouf, the replacement of Israeli forces in South Lebanon and Syrian forces in East Lebanon by an expanded UNIFIL with a different mandate. This mandate would have to include a pro-Israeli element eg to ensure the integrity of Israel's Northern border. Tactically, the objective would be for the three parts of the package to be implemented seriatim, ie the withdrawal of the MNF to come first, of the Israelis second and of the Syrians third. The last two would in practice have to be virtually simultaneous and would be the most difficult to achieve. Even if we failed on the total package, we might succeed over replacement of the MNF. At worst, we would oblige the Syrians and the Soviet Union to stand up and be counted as the principal opponents of something which would have the support of most of the world community.

I am sure that the experts will be able to find a thousand reasons, including timing, against our launching such an initiative. I can think of most of the objections myself. But I would find them more convincing if anyone could suggest an alternative to the present situation.

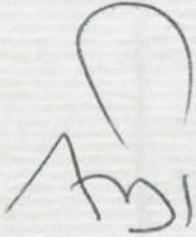
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/My recommendation

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My recommendation is that whoever represents us at the meeting of MNF contributors next week (I gather that it will be at senior official level not at the level of Foreign Ministers) should be briefed to have a first discussion of this idea with our MNF partners.



A.D. PARSONS  
16 December 1983

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FILE

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cc: Sir A Parsons

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

19 December, 1983

LEBANON

The Prime Minister has asked me to bring to the attention of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary some ideas which Sir Anthony Parsons has put to her about the situation in the Lebanon.

The heart of Sir Anthony Parsons' idea is that an initiative should be taken designed to replace all foreign forces in the Lebanon by UN forces/observers pending national reconciliation and the creation of a capability of the Lebanese Armed Forces to look after the security of their own country.

In more detail, he envisages the negotiation of an overall package which would secure the replacement of the MNF by a UN force with additional observers in the Chouf, and the replacement of Israeli forces in South Lebanon and Syrian forces in East Lebanon by an expanded UNIFIL with a different mandate. This mandate would have to include a pro-Israeli element, for example ensuring the integrity of Israel's Northern border. Tactically, the objective would be the implementation seriatim of the three parts of the package - i.e. the withdrawal of the MNF would come first, the Israelis second and the Syrians third. The last two would in practice have to be virtually simultaneous and would be the most difficult to achieve. Even if we failed on the total package, we might succeed over replacement of the MNF. At worst, we would oblige the Syrians and the Russians to stand up and be counted as the principal opponents of a proposal which would have the support of most of the world community.

Brian Urquhart told Tony Parsons on 15 December that he thought that the Israelis would be much less hostile than in the past to ideas of this kind, although they would be obliged to continue to harp on the 17 May agreement. Three senior Israelis including Sharon and Kimche had told him privately in recent weeks

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/that

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that they had changed their view about UNIFIL. They now realised that UNIFIL had done a good job and they would like to see its mandate resumed and extended.

One means of floating this idea might be to put it to the MNF contributors if and when a further meeting between them is arranged.

In any event, the Prime Minister would be most grateful for the views of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on these ideas.

A. J. COLES

P.F. Ricketts, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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