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FROM WASHINGTON 222306Z DEC 83.

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TELEGRAM NUMBER 3852 OF 22 DECEMBER

INFO PRIORITY BEIRUT, DAMASCUS, AMMAN, CAIRO,

TEL AVIV, UKMIS NEW YORK, PARIS.

MY TELNO. 3826: LEBANON.

1. KEMP (NSC STAFF) TOLD US TODAY THAT RUMSFELD'S FIRST ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST HAD NOT CARRIED MATTERS MUCH FURTHER FORWARD. HE WOULD BE RETURNING TO THE AREA IN THE NEW YEAR AND WOULD NEED THEN TO TAKE WITH HIM SOME MORE SPECIFIC IDEAS.

2. WE ASKED ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S REFERENCE DURING HIS PRESS CONFERENCE TO THE MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE 'MOVING BEHIND' THE LEBANESE ARMED FORCES AS THEY SOUGHT TO EXPAND THE AREAS UNDER THEIR CONTROL. WERE THE AMERICANS SERIOUSLY THINKING OF ENCOURAGING THE LAF TO TRY TO ASSERT THEIR CONTROL IN THE SHOUF AND/OR THE SOUTHERN SUBURBS OF BEIRUT? THIS SEEMED TO US WELL BEYOND THEIR CAPACITY. KEMP SAID THAT THIS WAS NOT THE US INTENTION, EXCEPT IN THE CONTEXT OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES, WHICH WAS AS FAR OFF AS EVER.

3. WE ASKED WHAT SORT OF IDEAS RUMSFELD WAS LIKELY TO TAKE BACK. KEMP SAID THE OPTIONS WERE STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION HERE. ONE IDEA BEING CANVASSED, HOWEVER, WAS THAT THE ISRAELIS MIGHT BE PERSUADED TO MAKE A FURTHER PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL, IF NECESSARY UNILATERALLY. THIS SHOULD BE DONE IN A WAY WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE LAF TO MOVE INTO THE AREA THUS VACATED. WE ENCOURAGED KEMP TO PURSUE IDEAS OF THIS KIND.

4. WE ASKED WHETHER THE AMERICANS HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT GEMAYEL WAS MAKING A SERIOUS ENOUGH EFFORT TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE OTHER FACTIONS. KEMP (PLEASE PROTECT) SAID THAT THE AMERICANS WERE NOT SATISFIED THAT HE WAS TRYING HARD ENOUGH. WHEN RUMSFELD WENT BACK TO THE AREA. HE WOULD LEAN ON GEMAYEL TO MAKE A MORE POSTIVE ATTEMPT TO CO-OPT OTHER CONFESSONAL LEADERS. THE PROBLEM REMAINED, HOWEVER, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SYRIAN PRESSURE ON THEM NOT TO PARTICIPATE.

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5. WE NOTED THAT TWO THIRDS OF THE PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE HAD BEEN TAKEN UP WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT LEBANON. DID NOT THE WHITE HOUSE SEE A SERIOUS RISK OF THE FURTHER EROSION OF PUBLIC SUPPORT IF THERE WERE NO SIGNS OF PROGRESS NEXT YEAR? KEMP SAID THAT EVERYONE IN THE WHITE HOUSE WAS CONSCIOUS OF THIS DANGER. BUT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE FOR THE AMERICANS OR, HE HOPED, THE MNF CONTRIBUTORS SIMPLY TO PACK THEIR BAGS AND LEAVE. THE OBJECT HAD TO BE TO GET THE SYRIANS TO ALLOW THE LEBANESE FACTIONS ENOUGH LEEWAY TO COBBLE TOGETHER SOME SORT OF COMPROMISE WHICH WOULD GIVE A PROSPECT OF REASONABLE STABILITY, AT ANY RATE FOR SOME TIME.

6. ON THE FRENCH CONTRIBUTION TO THE MNF KEMP SAID THAT THE AMERICANS CONTINUED TO GET VERY DIFFERENT ABOUT FRENCH INTENTIONS FROM THE QUAI D'ORSAY ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE ELYSEE AND HERNUN ON THE OTHER. THE AMERICANS DID NOT RULE OUT AN EXPANDED ROLE FOR UNIFIL IF ANYONE COULD GET THE SYRIANS AND RUSSIANS TO AGREE TO THIS.

7. KEMP SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME LIVELY EXCHANGES WITH THE ISRAELIS ABOUT THE EVACUATION OF THE PLO FROM TRIPOLI, WITH THE ISRAELIS INITIALLY DECLINING TO GIVE ANY ASSURANCES THAT THEY WOULD NOT ATTACK DURING THE EVACUATION.

WRIGHT

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THIS TELEGRAM  
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