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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 December 1983

Prime Minister

DMS
23/12

Dear John,

Lebanon: MNF

We are following up the question of a UN force in the light of discussion in Cabinet yesterday. Meanwhile, you may find helpful the enclosed note which summarises the attitudes of those most closely concerned, including the UN Secretary-General. This is based on soundings taken in the past few days by Sir J Thomson in New York, which have helped to clarify the background to the UN Secretary-General's remarks and the present state of play in New York. As the note indicates, the Soviet position still appears fairly negative. We are not disposed to take this as the end of the matter.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Mottram (MOD).

Yours ever,

Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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From the Private Secretary

28 December 1983

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 23 December to John Coles about Lebanon.

The Prime Minister has noted that the Americans are not opposed in principle to an extended role for UNIFIL. Whilst noting also that the current Soviet position appears negative, she considers that it would be far too early to give up the attempt to persuade the Russians to agree. She therefore supports the conclusion of your covering letter.

As regards the attitude of President Gemayel, the Prime Minister has commented that although he may well prefer to rely on the MNF in its present form, he would probably not hold to this position if pressed with sufficient firmness. The Prime Minister has also suggested that there may be some inconsistency between the argument attributed to the Russians and Syrians in paragraph 6 of your note (that the problems of Lebanon are an internal matter and not appropriate for the UN) and their attitudes towards the UN presence in Cyprus.

The Prime Minister has indicated that she sees merit in the idea in paragraph 3 of Washington telegram 3852 that the Israelis might be persuaded to make a further partial withdrawal, if necessary unilaterally.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

MR. D. BARCLAY

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

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ANNEX C
MNF

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FROM WASHINGTON 222306Z DEC 83.

TO PRIORITY F C O

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 CONFESSIONAL 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 HERNOUN 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.

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LEBANON: REPLACEMENT OF MNF BY UN FORCES OR OBSERVERS

1. Mr Coles' letter of 19 December reports some ideas put to the Prime Minister by Sir Anthony Parsons.

2. These ideas are not entirely new. For many months we ^{and done nothing!} have been considering the possibility of broadening UNIFIL's mandate, notably to help provide physical protection for Palestinians on Lebanese territory. The French have also been thinking on similar lines to Sir A Parsons: M Cheysson told Sir Geoffrey Howe on 19 December that they proposed to discuss with a Soviet visitor to Paris ideas of handing over to UN forces some of the MNF tasks. HM Ambassador in Rome also elaborated on the same theme in his telegram number 695 of 20 December.

3. The basic requirements which need to be fulfilled before a UN force can take on new tasks are well summed up by the Secretary-General in para 3 of UKMIS New York telegram number 1714. The following are required:

- a) A request from the host Government,
- b) Approval of the Security Council,
- c) Agreement from countries providing contributions to the operation and
- d) 'The support of the interested countries'.

If these conditions are met, the UN are ready to help: the UN 'always had contingency plans ready'. But none of the MNF contributors has yet put forward 'any official concrete request'.

4. It is clear from Washington telno 3852 para 6, that the Americans are in principle not opposed to extending the role for UNIFIL 'if anyone can get the Syrians and Russians to agree'.

It is equally clear from Paris telno 1198 that the French approach Mr Polyakov on 22 December produced nothing. The French believe

/that it

that it will be necessary to tackle the Russians at a more imaginative level. The Soviet Ambassador in New York, Mr Troyanovsky, who has some reputation for flexibility, has said that he would not object in principle to a UN role to strengthen the ceasefire, and to help the reconciliation process, but that he saw practical difficulties. He added that the Soviet Union would not be keen to help the Americans out of a political difficulty. The omens are therefore poor as far as Soviet agreement is concerned.

Not to be in bold otherwise.

5. The first step is however that Lebanon should request UN involvement. President Gemayel would probably prefer to rely on the MNF in its present form, and shelter for as long as possible behind the fire-power provided by the US contingent. While he might welcome an expanded role for UNIFIL in areas vacated by the Israeli and Syrian forces, he might not welcome UN involvement in keeping the peace between different Lebanese factions, which he regards as a proper role for the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces. But if presented with a united front from the four MNF contributors he would probably acquiesce. A Lebanese request for UN involvement would clearly carry more weight with all concerned if it had the backing of not only the Government of President Gemayel but also the other main factions. The UN Secretary-General appears to detect signs that the Lebanese attitude to Soviet Observers in Lebanon may be changing. This might give the Russians some incentive to be helpful, subject to Syrian views.

cf Cyprus?

6. Syria refused to agree to the deployment of UN observers in the Chouf in September. The Syrians have given no indication that they are ready to change their attitude. Like the Russians they have hitherto argued that the problems of Lebanon are an internal matter and not appropriate for the UN. They would also resist a UN role in a disengagement between Israeli and Syrian forces on terms which specifically put their own forces in Lebanon on the same footing as those of Israel. But the Syrians are clearly concerned about the risks of confrontation with the United States, and might be persuaded to modify their objections. They also wish to see the MNF depart and might agree to a UN role as a way of achieving this.

7. As longstanding sceptics about the UN in any form, the Israelis would not welcome the replacement of the MNF by a UN force. But they would find it hard to resist if everyone else agreed. There have recently been signs of a softening in their attitude on an expanded role for UNIFIL in the South and East of Lebanon. They might not object to a wider mandate for UNIFIL in South Lebanon and the Shouf provided that they were satisfied that their own needs could be met by the presence of the Lebanese Army or by other security arrangements.

23 December 1983

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FM ROME
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 695
OF 201715Z DECEMBER 1983

UKREP BRUSSELS TELNO 4543: LEBANON

1. I WAS INTERESTED TO READ THIS ACCOUNT OF WHAT CHEYSSON HAD SAID ABOUT THE NEED TO APPROACH THE RUSSIANS ABOUT A UN PRESENCE IN BEIRUT. I HAVE NOT SPOKEN TO THE ITALIANS ABOUT THIS, BUT I HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT ANDREOTTI WOULD FIND AN APPROACH TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE PASSAGE OF A NEW UN SECURITY RESOLUTION THE RATIONAL WAY OF DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM. THE ITALIANS FEEL INCREASINGLY EXPOSED IN LEBANON, AND AS YOU WILL HAVE SEEN HAVE NOW DECIDED TO REDUCE SUBSTANTIALLY THE NUMBER OF THEIR TROOPS. THERE IS A GENERAL FEELING THAT HAD THE IRANIAN TERRORISTS ATTACKED THE ITALIANS RATHER THAN THE FRENCH AND AMERICANS, THE ITALIAN CONTINGENT WOULD HAVE LEFT BY NOW. YET ITALY, LIKE THE OTHER MNF PARTNERS, IS RELUCTANT TO WITHDRAW IN THE FACE OF EXISTING U S OPPOSITION. A DIPLOMATIC APPROACH TO THE RUSSIANS MIGHT BE THE OBVIOUS ROUTE TO ANDREOTTI, AND WOULD ALSO BE WELCOME TO SPADOLINI, WHO HAS FOR SOME TIME WANTED TO SEE MORE UN INVOLVEMENT.
2. THE MOST DIFFICULT ASPECT FOR ITALY, AS I PRESUME FOR OURSELVES, IS WHETHER WE TRY TO PERSUADE THE U S GOVERNMENT TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH AN ENQUIRY IN MOSCOW. IF I AM RIGHT IN BELIEVING THAT THE U S WOULD INSTINCTIVELY OPPOSE ANY MOVE WHICH INCREASED THE ROLE OF THE USSR IN THE MIDDLE EAST, IT MIGHT BE OPEN TO BRITAIN AND ITALY TO GIVE SOME DISCREET ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE FRENCH TO CONTINUE THEIR EXISTING CONTACTS WITH THE RUSSIANS.
3. TO ILLUSTRATE THE KIND OF APPROACH WHICH MIGHT BE MADE, WE COULD CONSIDER SOMETHING ON THE FOLLOWING LINES. THE THREE EUROPEAN PARTICIPANTS IN THE MNF HAD (THE FRENCH WERE SURE) NO DESIRE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN FIGHTING, IN SENDING THEIR CONTINGENTS TO THE LEBANON. THEIR MOTIVES HAD BEEN SOLELY TO ENCOURAGE THE PROCESS OF INTERNAL PACIFICATION, WHICH THEY HOPED WAS POSSIBLE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES A YEAR AGO. THESE HOPES HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED. BUT TO WITHDRAW THESE FORCES NOW WOULD SOLVE NOTHING, AND MIGHT INDEED AGGRAVATE THE SITUATION, BY CAUSING SYRIAN FORCES AND THOSE UNDER HER CONTROL TO STRENGTHEN THEIR HOLD ON CENTRAL AND NORTHERN LEBANON.

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WERE THAT TO HAPPEN, THERE WOULD BE A REAL RISK OF ISRAELI INTERVENTION AGAINST SUCH FORCES: AND EVEN IF CONFINED TO LEBANESE TERRITORY, THE BLOODSHED AND DAMAGE WOULD CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR USSR, IN ITS ROLE AS A TREATY PARTNER OF SYRIA, AS WELL AS FOR EVERYBODY ELSE. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THE PASSAGE OF A NEW SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION WOULD BE THE BEST WAY OF KEEPING THE COMBATANTS APART AND ENCOURAGING RECONCILIATION.

4. I HOPE YOU WILL FORGIVE ME FOR MAKING THIS SUGGESTION, IN AN AREA OF NO DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY OF MINE. BUT I PUT FORWARD THE IDEA IN CASE YOU WOULD LIKE ME TO SPEAK VERY INFORMALLY TO A SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL. I COULD DO THAT BUT WOULD HAVE TO GO BEFORE THE END OF THIS WEEK, BEFORE ITALIAN OFFICIALS CLOSE DOWN FOR THE HOLIDAY.

BRIDGES

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PS/FUS

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TO IMMEDIATE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1714 OF 22 DECEMBER

INFO WASHINGTON PARIS ROME BEIRUT DAMASCUS MOSCOW THE HAGUE

TEL AVIV *CAIRO*

TELECON NIXON/HUMFREY: LEBANON: SECRETARY GENERAL'S REMARKS.

FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S REMARKS ON LEBANON IN THE COURSE OF HIS END OF YEAR PRESS CONFERENCE ON 21 DECEMBER.

2. IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT HE SAID:

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF VIOLENCE AND REPRISAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND IN LEBANON IN PARTICULAR NEEDS TO BE ENDED URGENTLY. THEREAFTER IS A PALPABLE NECESSITY TO GET TO THE ROOTS OF THE PROBLEM AND WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL CONCERNED, TO INSTITUTE A NEGOTIATING PROCESS IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A COMPREHENSIVE, JUST AND LASTING SETTLEMENT. ONLY SUCH A SETTLEMENT CAN BRING CO-EXISTENCE AND PEACE TO THIS VITAL PART OF THE WORLD AND AVERT A CONFLICT WHICH MIGHT BE FAR MORE FUNDAMENTAL AND DESTRUCTIVE THAN WHAT THE REGION HAS SUFFERED SO FAR.

3. SUBSEQUENTLY, HE REPLIED TO TWO QUESTIONS ON THE SUBJECT AS FOLLOWS:

QUESTION: IS AN EXPANDED UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING ROLE IN LEBANON MORE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PARTIES NOW THAN WAS THE CASE A YEAR AGO: AND HOW DO YOU GAUGE THE PROSPECTS IN THE COMING YEAR FOR THE UNIFIL TROOPS REPLACING MULTINATIONAL TROOPS IN THE BEIRUT AREA?

THE SECRETARY GENERAL: THAT IS A VERY INTERESTING AND TIMELY QUESTION.

I CANNOT PASS JUDGEMENT ON THE BASIS OF WHAT I HAVE LEARNED FROM THE PAPERS, WHICH SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT ALL PARTIES CONCERNED ARE AGAIN THINKING OF THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A UNITED NATIONS PRESENCE IN LEBANON INSTEAD OF THE MULTINATIONAL FORCES. OF COURSE IT IS NOT FOR ME TO PASS ANY JUDGEMENT ON THE MULTINATIONAL FORCES. I REGRET THE LOSSES THEY HAVE HAD, BUT I CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN THAT THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES ARE PERHAPS THE BEST WAY OF PRESERVING PEACE IN THE LEBANON AREA - AND NOT ONLY IN LEBANON BUT IN THE WHOLE MIDDLE EAST AREA. WHY? BECAUSE THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES OPERATE UNDER SOME CONDITIONS WHICH ARE IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY OTHER GROUP OF COUNTRIES TO MEET. FOR INSTANCE, THEY HAVE A BROAD BASE BY VIRTUE OF THE SIMPLE FACT THAT THEY NEED THE SUPPORT OF THE 15 MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. SECONDLY, THEY HAVE A UNIFIED COMMAND. THIRDLY, THEY CAN EMBARK ON HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES. ALSO THEY CAN ACT ONLY IN SELF-DEFENCE AND HAVE ONLY /LIGHT.

LIGHT ARMS. THEN THE POSSIBILITY OF PASSING THROUGH WHAT THE MULTINATIONAL FORCES HAVE ENDURED IS ALMOST NON-EXISTENT. AS YOU KNOW, IN THE 13 OPERATIONS THAT THE UNITED NATIONS HAS MOUNTED SINCE ITS EXISTENCE WE HAVE HAD ONLY A FEW LOSSES AS COMPARED WITH THE HEAVY LOSSES THAT THE AMERICAN AND FRENCH SOLDIERS HAVE HAD. THAT IS WHY I THINK THE UNITED NATIONS IS IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE LEBANON WITH THE NECESSARY ASSISTANCE.

BUT OF COURSE THIS IS SOMETHING WE CANNOT DECIDE BY OURSELVES. WE NEED, FIRST OF ALL, A REQUEST FROM THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT: SECONDLY, WE NEED THE APPROVAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL: THIRDLY WE NEED THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF COUNTRIES TO OUR PEACE-KEEPING FORCE OPERATION: AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, WE NEED THE SUPPORT OF THE INTERESTED COUNTRIES.

IF ALL THESE CONDITIONS ARE MET, WE ARE ALWAYS PREPARED TO HELP. DO NOT FORGET THAT THE UNITED NATIONS ALWAYS HAS CONTINGENCY PLANS. IF WE ARE ASKED TO HELP, EVEN FOR HELPING THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN TROOPS FROM LEBANON OR FOR ANY OTHER EXERCISE, WE ARE ALWAYS PREPARED WITH CONTINGENCY PLANS.

QUESTION: ABOUT THE REPLACEMENT OF THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE BY UNITED NATIONS FORCES IN LEBANON: YOU SAID EARLIER THAT YOU HAD HEARD ABOUT THIS IN THE PAPERS. DO YOU MEAN TO SAY THAT THIS WAS NEVER RAISED WITH YOU BY ANY OF THE CONTRIBUTORS TO THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE? SECONDLY, IN THAT CASE, HOW CAN THE CONTINGENCY PLANS OF THE UNITED NATIONS POSSIBLY BE REALISTIC IN THE LIGHT OF THE MOVEMENT ON THE GROUND BY THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE? CAN YOU EXPLAIN THAT?

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL: WELL, FIRST OF ALL, I HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED ANY OFFICIAL, CONCRETE REQUEST FROM ANY OF THE FOUR PARTICIPANTS IN THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE, AND SECONDLY, WE ARE RATHER USED TO THIS KIND OF EXERCISE AND WE THINK THAT THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND RIGHT NOW DOES NOT AFFECT OUR PLANS. WE HAVE OUR CONTINGENCY PLANS, WHICH ARE FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE THE SITUATION IF WE ARE EVER ASKED TO REPLACE THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE.

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Prime Minister

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1722 OF 23 DECEMBER

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, PARIS, ROME

INFO ROUTINE MOSCOW, TEL AVIV, CAIRO, DAMASCUS, BEIRUT, THE HAGUE

MY TELNOS 1717 AND 1718: LEBANON: ROLE OF UN FORCES

MT

1. VAN DER STOEL CONFIRMED TO ME THIS MORNING THE ACCOUNT WHICH HIS MISSION HAD GIVEN US ON HIS MEETINGS WITH FATTAL (SYRIA), TROYANOVSKY (USSR) AND FAKHOURY (LEBANON) (MY TELNO 1718). MIFT CONTAINS, AS SUGGESTED, MY OWN ASSESSMENT OF WHERE WE NOW STAND IN THE LIGHT OF HIS SOUNDINGS AND OF THE SECRETARY-GENERALS REMARKS, AND OF THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILDING ON THEM. VAN DER STOELS OWN CONCLUSIONS WERE AS FOLLOWS.
2. HE SAID THAT AS PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL HE HAD APPROACHED THE LEBANON PROBLEM WITH THE VIEW THAT IT NEEDED TO BE TACKLED IN TWO STAGES. THE FIRST STAGE WOULD BE TO GET AGREEMENT IN THE COUNCIL ON AN EXPANDED ROLE FOR UN OBSERVERS. THE SECOND STAGE WOULD BE TO MOVE ON TO EXPLORE WAYS OF REPLACING THE MNF BY UN FORCES. DURING HIS PRESIDENCY HE HAD CONCENTRATED ENTIRELY ON THE FIRST STAGE, GETTING UN OBSERVERS, AND ON DISCOVERING WHETHER THE SYRIAN AND SOVIET OBJECTIONS TO THEIR DEPLOYMENT COULD BE OVERCOME.
3. HE HAD APPROACHED BOTH FATTAL AND TROYANOVSKY TWICE. ON THE SECOND OCCASION HE HAD TRIED OUT SEPARATELY ON THEM A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT FORMULAS ON THE DEPLOYMENT OF OBSERVERS BOTH WITHIN THE BEIRUT AREA AND/OR ELSEWHERE IN LEBANON. BOTH THE SYRIAN AND THE RUSSIAN RESPONSE HAD BEEN NEGATIVE. THE SYRIANS HAD ENUNCIATED A LARGE NUMBER OF TACTICAL OBJECTIONS. BUT THEIR MAIN POINT AND THAT OF THE RUSSIANS WAS THAT A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE LEBANON PROBLEM HAD TO COME FIRST.
4. VAN DER STOEL HAD CONCLUDED THAT FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE NO PROGRESS WAS POSSIBLE IN THE COUNCIL ON THE QUESTION OF UN OBSERVERS. THE SECRETARY-GENERAL SHARED THIS CONCLUSION. IF IT WAS PRESSED IN THE COUNCIL THE RUSSIAN TACTICS WERE LIKELY TO BE NOT TO CONFRONT IT HEAD ON BUT TO AMEND ANY DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (EG WITH REFERENCES TO IMMEDIATE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ETC) UNTIL IT WAS NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE TO THE WESTERN MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

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5. VAN DER STOEL THOUGHT THAT THE SYRIAN AND RUSSIAN POSITIONS WERE NOT NECESSARILY IDENTICAL. THEY HAD BOTH MADE CLEAR TO HIM THAT THEY WERE NOT TAKING THE SAME VIEW, THOUGH THE RUSSIANS HAD SAID THAT THE SYRIAN POSITION WAS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR THEM. HE HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY STRUCK BY TROYANOVSKY SAYING TWICE TO HIM THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE NOT GOING TO DO ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT HELP THE AMERICANS. VAN DER STOEL HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THIS WAS CENTRAL TO THEIR POSITION. HE THOUGHT, PERSONALLY, THAT THE RUSSIANS MIGHT BE SEEING THE SITUATION IN TERMS OF TWO ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS BOTH FAVOURABLE TO THEMSELVES. THE FIRST WAS THAT THE MNF WOULD REMAIN IN LEBANON, AND THAT THE US FORCES WOULD PAY A HEAVY PRICE FOR THIS WITH DAMAGING REPERCUSSIONS FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN'S RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN: THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING THE PRESIDENT LOSE THE ELECTION WOULD BE VERY IMPORTANT TO THEM. THE SECOND WAS THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN WOULD FEEL OBLIGED TO WITHDRAW US FORCES FROM LEBANON THEREBY PRESENTING THE SOVIET UNION WITH A VICTORY. VAN DER STOEL HAD HOPED THAT THE RUSSIANS MIGHT BE SUFFICIENTLY WORRIED ABOUT THE RISKS OF AN ESCALATION IN LEBANON LEADING TO SUPER POWER CONFRONTATION THAT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO RECONSIDER THEIR POSITION. BUT THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF THIS. HE CONCLUDED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE IN RUSSIAN OPPOSITION TO EXPANDED UN INVOLVEMENT UNTIL EITHER A SUFFICIENTLY FRIGHTENING ESCALATION TOOK PLACE OR THE US WAS PREPARED TO BRING THE RUSSIANS INTO NEGOTIATIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST.

6. SEE MIFT

THOMSON

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MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)

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PROTOCOL DEPT

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TEL NO 1718 OF 22 DECEMBER 1983

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON PARIS ROME

INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW TEL AVIV CAIRO DAMASCUS BEIRUT

THE HAGUE

MIPT: LEBANON: ROLE OF UN FORCES

1. THE DUTCH MISSION HAVE GIVEN US THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF THE MEETINGS WHICH VAN DER STOEL HAD YESTERDAY AND TODAY, IN HIS CAPACITY AS PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL, WITH THE SYRIAN, LEBANESE AND RUSSIAN AMBASSADORS. THE MEETINGS FOLLOWED EARLIER INFORMAL SOUNDINGS WHICH HE HAD MADE WITH THE SYRIANS AND RUSSIANS NEARER THE BEGINNING OF THE DUTCH PRESIDENCY THIS MONTH ABOUT THEIR ATTITUDE TO UN OBSERVERS IN LEBANON (MY TELNO 1529, NOT TO ALL).

2. VAN DER STOEL SAW FATTAL (SYRIA) ON 21 DECEMBER. THIS TIME HE, APPARENTLY, PUT MORE SPECIFIC IDEAS TO HIM ABOUT INCREASING THE PRESENCE OF UN OBSERVERS IN THE BEIRUT AREA. THEY DISCUSSED THE MATTER FOR ABOUT AN HOUR. FATTAL HAD ASKED A LOT OF QUESTIONS. HE HAD NOT REPEATED THE SYRIAN POSITION THAT IT WAS PURELY AN INTERNAL LEBANESE MATTER. HE HAD SHOWN SOME INTEREST IN WHAT VAN DER STOEL SAID AND HAD PROMISED TO CONVEY THE DUTCH IDEAS TO DAMASCUS. BUT HE HAD INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT A CHANGE IN THE SYRIAN POSITION.

3. VAN DER STOEL NEXT SAW FAKHOURY (LEBANON) TODAY (22 DECEMBER) WHO CONFIRMED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS IN FAVOUR OF INCREASING THE NUMBER OF UN OBSERVERS. WHEN VAN DER STOEL ASKED FOR HIS REACTION TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S REMARKS ON REPLACING THE MNF BY UN FORCES (MY TELNO 1714), FAKHOURY WAS HESITANT, BUT SAID THAT HE WOULD ASK FOR INSTRUCTIONS FROM BEIRUT ON THIS POINT.

4. VAN DER STOEL SUBSEQUENTLY TALKED TO TROYANOVSKY (USSR). WHEN HE BROACHED THE QUESTION OF UN OBSERVERS, TROYANOVSKY REPLIED THAT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO ENVISAGE SUCH AN EXPANDED UN ROLE SINCE IT COULD ONLY BE LIMITED TO THE INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE LEBANESE SITUATION WHICH WERE VERY DIFFICULT TO SEPARATE FROM THE INTERNAL ASPECTS. (IT IS PERHAPS SIGNIFICANT THAT TROYANOVSKY, LIKE FATTAL, DID NOT TRY TO SUGGEST THAT THE SITUATION IN LEBANON WAS A PURELY INTERNAL MATTER). HE SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT OBJECT IN PRINCIPLE TO A UN ROLE TO STRENGTHEN THE CEASEFIRE AND HELP THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS BUT HE SAW ALL KINDS OF PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES IN ACHIEVING THIS. MORE OMINOUSLY, HE SAID THAT QUITE FRANKLY THE SOVIET UNION WAS NOT GOING TO HELP THE AMERICANS (BY IMPLICATION TO GET OUT OF LEBANON). HE WAS NEGATIVE ABOUT THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S COMMENTS ON A ROLE FOR UN FORCES, SAYING THAT THE SOVIET OBJECTIONS AGAINST UN OBSERVERS WOULD BE EVEN STRONGER IN RELATION TO UN FORCES.

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5. THE DUTCH MISSION THOUGHT THAT TROYANOVSKYS POSITION HAD HARDENED SOMEWHAT SINCE THEY LAST SPOKE TO HIM EARLIER THIS MONTH. HE HAD TAKEN THE LINE THEN THAT HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER ANY PROPOSAL PUT TO HIM. THE DUTCH HAD NOT BEEN SURE AT THE TIME WHETHER THIS MERELY REFLECTED TROYANOVSKYS MORE CONCILIATORY MANNER OR SOMETHING MORE.

6. THE DUTCH HAVE ALSO SPOKEN TO THE AMERICANS HERE. AFTER TAKING SOME TIME TO RESPOND, THE AMERICANS WERE APPARENTLY NON-COMMITTAL BUT SUPPORTED VAN DE STOELS EFFORTS TO SOUND OUT THE RUSSIANS AND SYRIANS. IN CONVERSATION WITH ME L'ICHENSTEIN (US) SAID THAT HE WAS NOT CLEAR ABOUT WHAT PROPOSITIONS WERE UNDER DISCUSSION AND IN WHAT SETTING. HE SPOKE CALMLY ABOUT THE IDEA OF SOVIET OBSERVERS IN THE LEBANON (PARA 5 OF MY IPT AND SEEMED TO THINK (PROBABLY CORRECTLY) THAT IT HAD ARISEN IN CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND MY NETHERLANDS COLLEAGUE.

7. MY ITALIAN COLLEAGUE SAYS THAT WHEN ANDREOTTI IS HERE FOR A COUPLE OF SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS IN MID-JANUARY HE WILL VISIT WASHINGTON PRINCIPALLY IN ORDER TO DISCUSS THE LEBANON.

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MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)

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PROTOCOL DEPT
PS

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1717 OF 22 DECEMBER 1983

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, PARIS, ROME

PRIORITY MOSCOW, TEL AVIV, CAIRO, DAMASCUS, BEIRUT, THE HAGUE.

YOUR TELNO 923 (NOT TO THE HAGUE): LEBANON: ROLE OF UN FORCES

1. THE SECRETARY-GENERAL IS ENORMOUSLY BUSY (WITH THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER AMONGST OTHERS) BUT AT MY URGENT REQUEST HE GAVE ME 20 MINUTES THIS EVENING (22 DECEMBER).
2. I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD INSTRUCTIONS FROM MY MINISTERS TO PROBE THE THINKING BEHIND HIS REMARKS TO THE PRESS YESTERDAY (THE TEXT OF WHICH I SENT TO YOU EARLIER TODAY AS MY TELNO 1714).
3. PEREZ DE CUELLAR SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD NOTHING OFFICIAL OR CONCRETE FROM ANY OF THE MNF CONTRIBUTORS ON THEIR INTEREST IN UN INVOLVEMENT ADDITIONAL TO THE OBSERVER GROUP IN BEIRUT. HE HAD READ OF ITALIAN INTENTIONS IN THE NEWSPAPERS AND HAD HAD AN INFORMAL APPROACH FROM MY FRENCH COLLEAGUE. BUT THESE WERE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR A FORMAL REQUEST FROM THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND THE APPROVAL OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, THE TROOP CONTRIBUTORS AND THE PARTIES. HE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SYRIANS.
4. I ASKED WHETHER HE HAD HEARD ANYTHING MORE POSITIVE RECENTLY FROM THE RUSSIANS AND THE SYRIANS. HE SAID NOT. THE ONLY HOPEFUL SIGN WAS THAT, ACCORDING TO MY LIBYAN COLLEAGUE (WHOM HE ALSO SAW THIS AFTERNOON ON ANOTHER MATTER) GEMAYAL HAD HAD A GOOD MEETING WITH QADDAFI WHICH MIGHT IMPROVE THINGS WITH THE SYRIANS.
5. I SAID THAT IN THAT CASE THE SITUATION SEEMED VERY SIMILAR TO WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER SAW HIM ON 30 SEPTEMBER AND EXPLAINED OUR POSITION (MY TELNO 982, NOT TO ALL). TO DRAW HIM OUT I SAID THAT MY PERSONAL VIEW WAS THAT A GREATER UN INVOLVEMENT IN PEACEKEEPING IN LEBANON WOULD HAVE TO FORM PART OF A PACKAGE. IT WAS NOT OVERLY IMPORTANT WHETHER THE INCREASED UN INVOLVEMENT TOOK THE FORM OF MORE OBSERVERS OR UNIFIL UNDER A DIFFERENT MANDATE. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO MIX THE TWO. PEREZ DE CUELLAR REPLIED THAT FROM THE UN POINT OF VIEW OBSERVERS WOULD BE ADEQUATE BUT HE WAS FLEXIBLE AND WOULD BE READY TO HELP WITH ANY FORMULA WHICH WAS ACCEPTABLE TO ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED. HE NOTED THAT FORMALLY SPEAKING THERE WERE SOME SOVIET OFFICERS IN THE U.N. OBSERVER GROUP FOR THE LEBANON BUT IN PRACTICE THEY WERE ALL IN CAIRO OR DAMASCUS. THE LEBANESE DID NOT WANT THEM IN LEBANON BUT HE WONDERED WHETHER THIS ATTITUDE MIGHT BE CHANGING AND IF SO WHETHER IT WOULD HELP. IN TURN I WONDERED WHETHER THE PRESENCE OF A FEW SEOVIET OFFICERS WOULD MAKE A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE TO THE SYRIANS. AS I LEFT, PEREZ DE CUELLAR APOLOGISED FOR NOT HAVING BEEN MORE INFORMATIVE AND REMARKED THAT THE REAL PROBLEM WAS WHETHER THE RUSSIANS WOULD BE PREPARED TO HELP THE AMERICANS OUT OF LEBANON IN THE PRESENT SUPERPOWER CLIMATE. HE DID NOT THINK THEY WOULD.

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6. THE QUESTION OF LEBANON IS VERY MUCH IN PEOPLE'S MINDS HERE. I HAVE HAD FRAGMENTARY DISCUSSIONS ABOUT IT WITH MY ITALIAN COLLEAGUE AND AMBASSADOR LICHENSTEIN (US) AND AM DUE TO SEE MY NETHERLANDS COLLEAGUE TOMORROW MORNING (23 DECEMBER) IN HIS CAPACITY AS PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. HE HAS SEEN MY SYRIAN, LEBANESE AND RUSSIAN COLLEAGUES: AN ACCOUNT OF HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH THEM IS IN MIFT. I SHALL REPORT FURTHER WHEN I HAVE SEEN HIM BUT HE HAS ALREADY WARNED ME THAT HIS CONCLUSION FROM HIS SOUNDINGS IS THAT THERE IS NO REASON TO BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT A POSSIBLE BREAKTHROUGH ON THE QUESTION OF UN INVOLVEMENT AND THAT HE DOES NOT INTEND TO TAKE THE MATTER ANY FURTHER DURING THE REMAINDER OF HIS PRESIDENCY.

7. I DO NOT HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL IS ENGAGED IN SOME SECRET NEGOTIATION ON THE LEBANON AS HE HAS BEEN ON CYPRUS. HE IS OPEN TO SUGGESTIONS AND WOULD LIKE TO BE HELPFUL. BUT HE REMAINS VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED FOR A SECURITY COUNCIL MANDATE AND OF THE DIFFICULTY OF SECURING ONE. AFTER SPEAKING WITH THE NETHERLANDS AMBASSADOR I WILL ATTEMPT AN ASSESSMENT OF HOW WE MIGHT BUILD ON THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REMARKS.

8. SEE MIFT.

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