

O R 241640Z DEC 83  
FM BRITFOR LEBANON (ATTN FCO FROM MODUK)  
TO RBDWC/MODUK FCO LONDON  
INFO RBDWDFG/BEIRUT

SECRET

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BT

S E C R E T

SIC 19E

FOR DUTY OFFICER FROM COMD. HAVE JUS RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM CHARGE. PLEASE PASS AS DIRECTED TO RESIDENT CLERK. LEBANON: CEASE FIRE COMMITTEE.

FOLLOWING FOR RESIDENT CLERK

1. I UNDERSAND FROM

COMMANDER DRITFORLEB THAT THE PARTIES TO THE CEASEFIRE COMMITTEE WISH URGENTLY TO SET UP A VIOLATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE LOCATED IN THE BRITISH BASE AT AL HADATH. THE MAIN COMMITTEE WOULD CONTINUE TO MEET AT THE TRAD BANK, BUT LESS FREQUENTLY.

2. THIS PROPOSAL (OR SOMETHING SIMILAR) HAS BEEN FLOATED BEFORE BUT NEVER PUT TO US FORMALLY. IT HAS NOW BEEN REVIVED BECAUSE THE PARTIES HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY RECOGNISED THAT THEY ARE NO GOING AGAINST 24 - HOUR GUARDING, GIVEN OUR FIRM POSITION ON NO NIGHT GUARDING

AND THE FORTHCOMING REDUCTION OF THE ITALIAN CONTINGENT. THIS PROPOSAL ALSO ACCORDS WITH THE ARRANGEMENTS DISCUSSED AT THE SECURITY MEETING ON 16 DECEMBER IN DAMASCUS - NAMELY THAT THE SECURITY COMMITTEE SHOULD CONCERN ITSELF WITH STRATEGY AND POLICY (EG DISENGAGEMENT OF FORCES ON THE GROUND) WHILST A SUB COMMITTEE SHOULD HANDLE ROUTINE INCIDENTS.

3. COMMANDER BRITFORLEB CONSIDERS THAT HE HAS THE MANPOWER RESOURCES TO UNDERTAKE THIS TASK. I CONSIDER THAT THE PROPOSAL HAS

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FOLLOWING ADVANTAGES

A) ENHANCING THE PRESTIGE AND WORK OF THE CEASEFIRE COMMITTEE REMAINS THE BEST HOPE OF IMPROVING HOWEVER SLIGHTLY, SECURITY ON THE GROUND - WHICH SHOULD BENEFIT THE MNF AS A WHOLE. IF SITING THE VIOLATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE IN THE HADATH BASE IS THE ONLY WAY OF GETTING IT OFF THE GROUND (AND THIS APPEARS TO BE THE CASE) WE WOULD BE MAKING AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO SECURITY BY AGREEING TO IT.

B) WE WOULD BE SEEN TO BE EVEN MORE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH MOVES TOWARDS RECONCILIATION WHICH ACCORDS WITH OUR CURRENT POLICY AND BRITFORLEB'S MISSION. IN DOMESTIC POLITICAL TERMS IT WOULD BE DEFENSIBLE.

C) THE PERMANENT PRESENCE IN THE BASE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF EACH OF THE 4 PARTIES TO THE CEASEFIRE SHOULD LESSON THE RISK TO OUR CONTINGENT OF ATTACK BY ANY ONE OF THEM - AND PERHAPS TOO OF THE BASE BEING CAUGHT IN INTER-FACTIONAL CROSSFIRE. THE VIOLATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE WOULD IN A SENSE BE A HOSTAGE TO OUR OWN SECURITY.

4. AGAINST THIS THERE ARE DISADVANTAGES:

A) WE WOULD BE RAISING OUR CONTINGENT'S PROFILE WHEN OUR MNF PARTNERS ARE REDUCING (OR HAVE TOLD US THEY WISH TO REDUCE) THEIRS.

B) AS A CONSEQUENCE WE RISK BEING THE TARGET OF ATTACK BY GROUPS (EG ISLAMIC AMAL AND THE COMMUNISTS) WHO ARE OPPOSED TO RECONCILIATION ALTOGETHER.

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C) IN THE EVENT OF OUR WANTING TO WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON OR FROM THE HADATH BASE WE WOULD HAVE MORE DIFFICULTY IN THAT OUR DEPARTURE WOULD BRING ABOUT THE COLLAPSE OF THE VIOLATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE. ON (A) WE WOULD BE RAISING OUR PROFILE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION (UNLIKE THE FRENCH AND THE AMERICAN WHO ARE BEING MORE AGGRESSIVE IN SUPPORT OF ONE PARTY - THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT). AS FOR (B) WE RUN THAT RISK ALREADY AS AN HIGHER PROFILE COULD INCREASE THE RISK, BUT I BELIEVE ONLY marginally. (C) could BE A PROBLEM. WE SHOULD TRY TO SOLVE IT BY ENCOURAGING THE LEBANESE TO THINK MORE SERIOUSLY ABOUT GUARDING THEMSELVES. I KNOW WE HAVE NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL SO FAR, BUT WE SHOULD KEEP TRYING.

5. ON BALANCE I RECOMMEND THAT WE SHOULD ACCEPT THIS PROPOSAL WHEN IT IS PUT TO US. I GATHER THAT THE SECURITY COMMITTEE ARE WAITING FOR PSP AGREEMENT BEFORE THEY DO SO. COMMANDER BRITFORLEB (WHO WILL NO DOUBT BE ASKED BEFORE I SHALL) SHOULD INSIST THAT THE PROPOSAL IS PUT TO US FORMALLY BY THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE DIPLOMATIC CHANNEL. BUT WE NEED TO BE READY WITH OUR ANSWER VERY SOON.

6. I UNDERSTAND FROM FERGUSON THAT THE PROPOSAL IS BEING STUDIED WITHIN MOD. I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL IF THE RESIDENT CLERK COULD PASS THE CONTENTS OF THIS TELEGRAM URGENTLY TO EGERTON AND LONG (NEWAD). AND TO THE AMBASSADOR CURRENTLY ON LEAVE IN HAMPSHIRE, WHOSE VIEWS SHOULD BE SOUGHT.

SIGNED PALMER

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING ST]

MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)

LIMITED

NEWAD

MED

DEFENCE DEPT

FUSD

NEWS DEPT

UND

NAD

WED

SFD

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 TO:

MOD DS11

MR GOODALL ) CABINET

SIR R ARMSTRONG ) OFFICE

SIR P MOORE

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

# SECRET