

Note PM's comments  
on FCO 552  
relayed by phone.



Emub  
29/1/2

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

LEBANON

No  
mb

I understood that the Foreign Secretary discussed with you at Chequers the possibility that we might be asked to allow a "Violations Subcommittee" to meet inside Britforlab's HQ.

Subsequent developments are set out in the attached telegrams:

FCO 552 seeks clarification on various points, which presumably reflect your discussion with the FCS

PTO

Beirut 742 contains responses  
from the Post.

No final request has yet  
been received from the  
Lebanese government (see para  
4 of Beirut telegram).

Further developments are not  
expected before tomorrow.

JMS

28/12



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FM BEIRUT 281010Z DEC 83

TO IMMEDIATE F.C.O.

TELEGRAM NUMBER 742 OF 28 DECEMBER 1983

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK, WASHINGTON, PARIS, ROME

SAVING BRITFORLES

YOUR TELNO 552; LEBANON - CEASEFIRE COMMITTEE

1. THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS IN YOUR PARAGRAPH 3 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) THE CEASEFIRE COMMITTEE FORESAW THE NEED SOME WEEKS AGO FOR A VIOLATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE WHICH WOULD PROVIDE A PERMANENT MECHANISM BY WHICH INCIDENTS AND VIOLATIONS OF THE CEASEFIRE COULD BE RESPONDED TO ON THE SPOT. HENCE THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE SUB-COMMITTEE SHOULD FUNCTION ROUND THE CLOCK. THIS PROMPTED THE LEBANESE REQUEST TO US AND THE ITALIANS IN OCTOBER/NOVEMBER TO SHARE THE TASK OF GUARDING THE TRAD BANK 24 HOURS A DAY. THE NEED FOR A VIOLATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE ON THIS BASIS HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED FOLLOWING THE RE-DEFINITION OF THE ROLE OF THE MAIN CEASEFIRE COMMITTEE AT THE DAMASCUS MEETING ON 16 DECEMBER (PARA 2 OF MY TELNO SIC 19E OF 24 DECEMBER).

(B) AT PRESENT, WHEN INCIDENTS OCCUR OUT OF MEETING HOURS, THE MEMBERS OF THE CEASEFIRE COMMITTEE TRY TO COPE WITH THEM BY TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION WITHOUT ANY CENTRAL FOCAL POINT. THE VIOLATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE IN A FIXED LOCATION IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE THIS.

(C) THE CEASEFIRE COMMITTEE'S FIRST CHOICE FOR LOCATING THE VIOLATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE REMAINS THE TRAD BANK. HOWEVER, SINCE WE AND THE ITALIANS ARE NOT ABLE (OR WILLING) TO PROVIDE GUARDING AT THE BUILDING TO ENABLE THE SUB-COMMITTEE TO FUNCTION THERE ROUND THE CLOCK, SITING IT AT AL HADATH SEEMS TO THE COMMITTEE THE NEXT BEST OPTION. OTHER LOCATIONS, EG THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, THE AIRPORT AND THE OLD MINISTRY OF HEALTH BUILDING NEAR THE MUSEUM (WHERE THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR GENEVA MET IN OCTOBER) HAVE BEEN REJECTED AS UNACCEPTABLE BY ONE OR OTHER OF THE PARTIES. IN



BEEN REJECTED AS UNACCEPTABLE BY ONE OR OTHER OF THE PARTIES. IN ANY CASE 24 HOUR GUARDING BY THE MNF WOULD STILL BE REQUIRED.

(D) SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS HAVE NOT (NOT) YET BEEN FULLY WORKED OUT. COMMANDER BRITFORLEB ENVISAGES ALLOCATING A PART OF HIS BASE (SEE (E) BELOW) EQUIPPED WITH COMMUNICATIONS, WASHING AND COOKING FACILITIES TO ENABLE THE MEMEBERS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE (EIGHT - TWO PER FACTION) TO OPERATE 24 HOUR SHIFTS. BRITFORLEB WOULD ROTATE THESE SHIFTS DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS BY ESCORTING EACH GROUP OF 8 TO AND FROM THE TRAD BANK. (THEY WOULD THEREFORE HAVE REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL FOUR FACTIONS ON BOARD AT ANY ONE TIME AS HOSTAGES FOR THEIR SECURITY.) THE SUB-COMMITTEE ARE NOT EXPECTED TO RECEIVE VISITORS (OTHER THAN PERHAPS CEASEFIRE COMMITTEE MEMBERS). THEY EXPECT TO DO THEIR WORK BY TELEPHONE/RADIO. THE REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE PARKING FACILITIES SHOULD NOT THEREFORE ARISE AND "UNEXPECTED VEHICLES" WOULD BE DEALT WITH IN THE SAME WAY AS ANY OTHER "UNEXPECTED VEHICLES".

(E) FERGUSON PROPOSES TO ALLOCATE TO THE SUB-COMMITTEE AN UNOCCUPIED ROOM ON THE FOURTH FLOOR OF HIS BASE IN THE WING USED BY HIS LEBANESE LIAISON OFFICERS. THE SUB-COMMITTEE WILL THUS NOT BE TAKING UP SPACE WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE BY USED BY BRITFORLEB FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES.

2. FERGUSON HAS ALREADY PUT THE SUGGESTIONS IN (D) AND (E) ABOVE INFORMALLY TO THE CEASEFIRE COMMITTEE, WHO HAVE BROADLY ACCEPTED THEM. HE HAS ALSO DISCUSSED IN GENERAL TERMS THE PROPOSAL WITH HIS SUCCESSOR, BUT WILL BRIEF HIM MORE FULLY ON ARRIVAL.

3. IF THIS PROPOSAL PRESENTS YOU WITH TOO MANY DIFFICULTIES, AN ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY WOULD BE TO PERSUADE THE ITALIANS TO BE MORE COOPERATIVE OVER GUARDING THE TRAD BANK ON A 24 HOUR BASIS. THE LEBANESE UNDERSTAND THAT BRITFORLEB ARE NOT EQUIPPED FOR NIGHT GUARDING DUTIES. THE ITALIANS APPEAR NOT TO. BOTH THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR AND FORCE COMMANDER TELL US THAT THE ISSUE IS CURRENTLY VERY DIFFICULT FOR THEIR GOVERNMENT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PURSUE THIS COURSE, I RECOMMEND THAT ACTION WITH THE ITALIANS BE TAKEN IN ROME OR LONDON RATHER THAN HERE.

4. ON TIMING, THE LEBANESE ARE NOT READY TO PUT A PROPOSAL TO US BECAUSE THE PSP HAVE NOT YET ASSENTED TO IT. I SUSPECT THAT THE EVENTS OF 24-26 DECEMBER WILL HAVE MADE AGREEMENT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THEM. IF THEY TURN IT DOWN, AMAL ARE LIKELY TO FOLLOW SUIT. NONETHELESS, I CONSIDER THAT IT WOULD STILL BE RIGHT TO HAVE AN ANSWER READY IN THE EVENT THAT THE LEBANESE DO PUT A FORMAL REQUEST TO US.

PALMER  
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TO IMMEDIATE BEIRUT  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 552 OF 27 DECEMBER  
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, PARIS, ROME  
INFO MODUK

YOUR TELNO SIC19E TO RESIDENT CLERK (NOW BEING REPEATED FOR COPY ADDRESSEES): LEBANON CEASE-FIRE COMMITTEE

1. WE ARE NATURALLY KEEN TO BE HELPFUL OVER ANY REQUEST WHICH COULD CONTRIBUTE TO REDUCING THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE AND HENCE CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE-MAKING IN LEBANON. WE MUST, HOWEVER, IN THE PRESENT DANGEROUS SITUATION TAKE ALL POSSIBLE PRECAUTIONS TO ENSURE THAT ANY NEW DEPARTURES DO NOT CONTRADICT OUR OVERALL POLITICAL AND MILITARY STANCE AND THOSE OF OUR MNF PARTNERS. DECISIONS ON MATTERS OF THIS KIND HAVE TO BE TAKEN AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL.

2. A GOOD DEAL MUST ALSO CLEARLY DEPEND ON THE FORM AND SOURCE OF THE FORMAL REQUEST WHICH YOU WILL ULTIMATELY RECEIVE AND THE POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AT THE TIME.

3. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, WE SHOULD WELCOME CLARIFICATION OF THE FOLLOWING POINTS.

(A) WHY IS IT CONSIDERED NECESSARY FOR THE NEW SUB-COMMITTEE TO MEET ON A 24-HOUR BASIS? A 24-HOUR SYSTEM COULD BE LESS EFFECTIVE BY REMOVING NATURAL DEADLINES AND THUS REDUCING TIME PRESSURES FOR AGREEMENT. MORE MEETING TIME MIGHT DELIVER LESS AND NOT (NOT) MORE AGREEMENT.

(B) DEPENDING ON THE ANSWERS TO (A), WHY SHOULD THE SUB-COMMITTEE NOT MEET AT THE TRAD BANK OR SOME OTHER VENUE THAN INSIDE BRITFORLEB'S HQ? WHAT ALTERNATIVES HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED?

(C) HAVE THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS BEEN FULLY WORKED OUT, NOTABLY THE REQUIREMENT FOR CONTROL AND PARKING AT A

To deal immediately with a breach

Because we can't defend the bank on we have been in the President mentioned this should be worked



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SAFE DISTANCE OF VEHICLES ARRIVING AND DEPARTING THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT? UNEXPECTED VEHICLES AND VISITORS WOULD ALSO HAVE TO BE CATERED FOR. ALL THIS WOULD SEEM TO REQUIRE A SUBSTANTIAL DEGREE OF EFFORT: COMMANDER BRITFORLEB HAS PRESUMABLY ALSO PUT HIS SUCCESSOR IN THE PICTURE.

(D) WOULD THE CONSTANT PRESENCE OF SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN PRACTICE MAKE BRITFORLEB HQ NOT USUABLE FOR OFF-DUTY PURPOSES AND THUS ENTAIL REGULAR COMMUTING OF BRITFORLEB PERSONNEL BY LANDING CRAFT OR HELICOPTER TO HMS FEARLESS?

4. GRATEFUL FOR ANSWERS ON THESE POINTS DESKBY 290900Z, TOGETHER WITH ANY FURTHER NEWS OF WHEN THE FORMAL REQUEST CAN BE EXPECTED. IF ONE IS RECEIVED MEANWHILE, YOU SHOULD DRAW ON THE POINTS IN PARA 1 ABOVE AND REPORT.

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MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)

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