

Prime Minister

GPS 200

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You wanted to write to the Secretary General before the New Year. In view of this advice, and the fact that Sir John Thomson is away from New York, FCO would prefer to delay until early next week.

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DESKBY 290900Z  
FM UKMIS NEW YORK 282017Z DEC 83  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TEL NO 1724 OF 28 DECEMBER 1983  
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON PARIS ROME  
INFO ROUTINE MOSCOW TEL AVIV CAIRO BEIRUT  
THE HAGUE

YOUR TELNO 927: LEBANON

FOLLOWING FROM MARGETSON

Content? Yes

Dub  
29/12

I HAVE DISCUSSED TUR WITH SIR J THOMSON WHO IS OUT OF NEW YORK FOR A FEW DAYS. HE WELCOMES THE IDEA OF A PRIME MINISTERIAL MESSAGE, BUT THINKS THAT ONE AT SUCH AN EARLY STAGE IN THE PROCESS WOULD PROBABLY BE PREMATURE. THE TACTICS TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE STRATEGY OUTLINED IN PARAS 3 TO 5 OF HIS TEL NO 1723 NEED TO BE CONSIDERED CAREFULLY. PERHAPS DISCUSSION WITH FRENCH AND ITALIANS WOULD BE A NECESSARY FIRST STAGE WITH WIDER CONSIDERATION AMONGST THE TEN SUBSEQUENTLY. THE QUESTION OF WHEN TO BRING IN THE AMERICANS WOULD BE IMPORTANT. SIR J THOMSON WILL CONSIDER ALL THIS FURTHER (INCLUDING WHEN TO ENGAGE THE SECRETARY GENERAL) AND FOLLOW UP WITH A TELEGRAM PROBABLY EARLY NEXT WEEK.

THOMSON

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING ST]

MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)  
LIMITED  
NENAD  
MED  
DEFENCE DEPT  
FUSD  
NEWS DEPT  
UND  
NAD  
WED  
SED  
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  
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HL

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

30 December 1983

Proposed Prime Ministerial message to the  
Secretary-General

We spoke on the telephone about the timing of the proposed message from the Prime Minister to the Secretary-General about the Lebanon, in the light of the advice in UKMIS telegram No. 927.

This is just to confirm that the Prime Minister agrees that consideration of the message may be postponed until next week.

David Barclay

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

NR

GR 780

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30/12

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DESKBY FCO 290900Z

FROM TEL AVIV 281405Z DEC 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 351 OF 28 DECEMBER 1983

INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK, WASHINGTON, PARIS, ROME, DAMASCUS  
AND BEIRUT.

INFO SAVING CAIRO, MOSCOW AND THE HAGUE.

YOUR TELEGRAM NO 927 TO UKMIS NEW YORK: LEBANON: UN FORCES

1. THE IDEA OF UN COVER FOR ISRAELI AND SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM  
LEBANON HAS CERTAIN OBVIOUS ATTRACTIONS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS.  
BUT THE ISRAELIS ARE LESS LIKELY TO SEE UN INVOLVEMENT ON THE GROUND  
IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AS A CONVENIENT WAY OUT.

2. I AM CLEAR IN MY OWN MIND THAT THE ISRAELIS MEAN IT WHEN THEY  
SAY THEY WANT TO WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON. THEY WOULD HAVE NO DIFF-  
CULTY WITH THE IDEA (PARAGRAPH 3 OF UKMIS NEW YORK TELNO 1723)  
OF SYRIAN AND ISRAELI MUTUAL AGREEMENT TO WITHDRAW THEIR TROOPS,  
PROBABLY IN STAGES. IT IS BASICALLY WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN ASKING FOR.

3. THE OFFICIAL LINE HERE IS STILL THAT ISRAELI AND SYRIAN  
WITHDRAWAL MUST BE SIMULTANEOUS, AS ENVISAGED IN ONE OF THE CON-  
FIDENTIAL SIDE LETTERS TO THE ISRAEL/LEBANON AGREEMENT. BUT THE  
ISRAELIS ARE NOW CONVEYING THE IMPRESSION BY NODS AND WINKS THAT  
SIMULTANEOUS SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL IS NO LONGER A SINE QUA NON, AND  
THEY SEEM TO BE WORKING TOWARDS A FURTHER PARTIAL UNILATERAL  
WITHDRAWAL IN THE SPRING (PERHAPS TO THE ZAHRANI), ON THE  
ASSUMPTION THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY WILL BE IN A POSITION BY THEN TO  
FILL THE RESULTING VACUUM.

4. THIS RAISES A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS:

- A) WHY SHOULD THE SYRIANS AGREE TO A UN PACKAGE OF MUTUAL  
WITHDRAWALS IF THEY JUDGE THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE ON THE RETREAT  
IN LEBANON ANYWAY AND ARE MEANWHILE TAKING CASUALTIES WHICH  
DAMAGE IDF MORALE?
- B) FAILING SYRIAN AGREEMENT, WILL THE ISRAELIS EVENTUALLY WITHDRAW  
UNILATERALLY TO THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER?
- C) IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES MIGHT THERE BE A ROLE FOR AN UNDOF  
TYPE FORCE IN SOUTH LEBANON (PARA 3 OF UKMIS TUR)?

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5. HM AMBASSADOR DAMASCUS IS BETTER PLACED THAN I AM TO ANSWER THE FIRST QUESTION. AS REGARDS TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, MY GUESS IS THAT THE IDF WILL EVENTUALLY PULL OUT COMPLETELY WHETHER OR NOT THE SYRIANS GO TOO, PROVIDED (AND THIS IS A PREREQUISITE) THEY ARE SATISFIED AS TO THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS THEY LEAVE BEHIND THEM IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

6. I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD NOT (NOT) REGARD AN UNDOF TYPE FORCE ON THE LEBANESE SIDE OF THE BORDER AS ASSURING THE SECURITY OF THE TOWNS AND SETTLEMENTS OF NORTHERN ISRAEL. SOUTHERN LEBANON IS NOT THE GOLAN. SYRIA DOES NOT CONTROL THE AREA. THE TOPOGRAPHY IS VERY DIFFERENT (THE GOLAN IS FOR THE MOST PART A TREELESS PLAIN AND THE ISRAELIS CAN SEE MOST OF THE WAY FROM HIT TO DAMASCUS). MOREOVER, WHEREAS THE ISRAELI-OCCUPIED GOLAN IS VIRTUALLY UNINHABITED, SOUTH LEBANON IS HEAVILY POPULATED AND, FROM ALL REPORTS, ARMED TO THE TEETH.

7. THE ISRAELIS NEVER ALLOWED UNIFIL TO DEPLOY TO THE ISRAEL/LEBANON BORDER, PREFERRING TO RELY ON MAJOR HADDAD AND HIS MILITIA. I AM SURE THEIR STRONG PREFERENCE IS STILL TO DEPEND ON LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS (EG THE TERRITORIAL BRIGADE ENVISAGED IN THE ISRAEL/LEBANON AGREEMENT). QUITE APART FROM THEIR ROOTED DISTRUST OF THE UN, THEY WILL TAKE SOME MOVING OFF THEIR BELIEF THAT LOCAL FORCES ARE FAR BETTER PLACED AND MOTIVATED THAN OUTSIDERS TO DETECT AND PREVENT INFILTRATION INTO SOUTH LEBANON. OF COURSE IT MAY HAPPEN THAT, LIKE SO MUCH ELSE, ISRAELI HOPES IN THIS RESPECT EVENTUALLY CRUMBLE AWAY, IN WHICH CASE AN UNDOF TYPE ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE BETTER THAN NOTHING. BUT NOT YET.

8. THE SAME OBJECTIONS DO NOT APPLY TO THE DEPLOYMENT OF UN FORCES ELSEWHERE IN LEBANON. FOR EXAMPLE THE ISRAELIS SUPPORT THE IDEA OF UN OBSERVERS IN THE CHOUF, AND THEY MIGHT COME ROUND TO ACCEPTING AN UNDOF TYPE FORCE IN THE BEKAA OR ALONG, SAY, THE ZAHRANI RIVER, TO PROVIDE AN EXTRA LAYER OF PROTECTION AGAINST PLO INFILTRATION. BUT I CANNOT MYSELF SEE WHY THE SYRIANS OR RUSSIANS SHOULD ACCOMMODATE THE ISRAELIS IN THIS WAY, AND SUCH A FORCE WOULD ALSO HAVE THE DISADVANTAGE OF APPEARING TO PARTITION LEBANON.

9. THE ISRAELIS HAVE HAD TO LOWER THEIR SIGHTS IN LEBANON CONSIDERABLY OVER THE PAST YEAR. FROM WHAT WE HEAR, THE IDF WANT TO GET OUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, ALTHOUGH THE LIKUD GOVERNMENT ARE STILL LOOKING FOR A FIG LEAF TO JUSTIFY THE HEAVY TOLL OF THE WAR. SYRIAN AGREEMENT TO WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON WOULD THEREFORE HAVE STRONG ATTRACTIVE FOR THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT. BUT I JUDGE THAT AT LEAST AT PRESENT THE PRICE THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO PAY WOULD NOT INCLUDE SUBSTITUTION OF A UN FORCE FOR THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS SET OUT IN THE ISRAEL/LEBANON AGREEMENT AS REGARDS THE VITAL AREA NEAR THEIR BORDER.

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10. TO SUM UP, ISRAELI/SYRIAN AGREEMENT TO WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON WOULD BE WELCOME HERE WITH OR WITHOUT A UN LABEL. BUT NO DOUBT IF AT PRESENT THE ISRAELIS WOULD ACCEPT AN UNDOF PRESENCE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THEIR BORDER WITH LEBANON AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO INDIGENOUS FORCES. ANY PLAN MIGHT STAND MORE CHANCE WITH THE ISRAELIS IF UN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT WERE DIRECTED PRIMARILY TO CENTRAL AND EASTERN LEBANON, WHILE LEBANESE ARMY AND LOCAL FORCES WERE SEEN AS RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY IN THE AREAS NEAREST TO THE ISRAELI BORDER.

11. FCO PASS SAVING ADDRESSEES.

MOBERLY

## MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)

LIMITED

NENAD

MED

DEFENCE DEPT

PUSD

NEWS DEPT

UND

NAD

WED

SED

ECD(E)

FINANCE DEPT

PROTOCOL DEPT

PS

PS/LADY YOUNG

PS/MR LUCE

PS/PUS

SIR J BULLARD

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MR WRIGHT

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