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TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 2 OF 3 JANUARY 1984
INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK, WASHINGTON, PARIS AND ROME
INFO PRIORITY DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV AND CBFC
INFO SAVING BRITFORLEB

BEIRUT TELNOS 737 AND 746: LEBANON

1. TODAY'S MEETING OF THE COORDINATION COMMITTEE WAS AGAIN CHAIRED BY THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF. HE SAID THAT HE WISHED TO PUT MNF GOVERNMENTS IN THE PICTURE ABOUT THE 'SECURITY PLAN'. THIS WOULD PROVIDE FOR SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, AGREED BY ALL PARTIES INCLUDING THE SYRIANS AND OTHER INTERESTED FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS (AND 'WHILE KEEPING THE ISRAELIS IN THE PICTURE'); TO BE PUT INTO EFFECT FROM THE AWALI TO THE NORTH OF THE COUNTRY AND FROM BEIRUT TO SHTOURA IN THE EAST. THE ARMY OR THE ISF WOULD ASSUME CONTROL IN ALL AREAS NOT OCCUPIED BY THE SYRIANS OR THE ISRAELIS. THE ONLY PLACE WHERE THE DISPOSITIONS WERE NOT YET FINALLY AGREED WAS THE SHOUF. BUT THE GOVERNMENT HOPED THAT, EVEN IF THE PSP CAUSED DELAY HERE, THIS NEED NOT AFFECT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN ELSEWHERE. IT WAS HOPED TO GO AHEAD IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS. IT WAS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL TO FIX UP THE IMPROVED COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE MNF CONTINGENTS AND THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WHICH HAD BEEN DISCUSSED THE PREVIOUS WEEK. IN THIS CONNECTION IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO EFFECT A SLIGHT RE-DEFINITION OF THE MNF'S ROLE, TO WHICH HE HOPED THAT MNF GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE ABLE TO AGREE VERY SOON.

2. THE PRESIDENT THEN ASKED GENERAL FARES (MILITARY ADVISER AT THE PALACE) TO EXPLAIN THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MNF IN MORE DETAIL. FARES SAID THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT ENVISAGED A RE-DEPLOYMENT OF THE MNF IN TWO PHASES. IN THE FIRST PHASE THE FRENCH WOULD RE-DEPLOY TO CERTAIN NEW POSITIONS (EFFECTIVELY THOSE THEY HAVE UNILATERALLY ADOPTED, IT SEEMS) WHICH WOULD REDUCE THEIR NUMBERS OF PATROLS AND CHECKPOINTS IN BEIRUT. THE ITALIANS WOULD TAKE OVER THE 'SOUK' AND HOTEL AREAS (THE LATTER EVACUATED BY THE FRENCH). THE AMERICANS WOULD CONTINUE TO GUARD THE AIRPORT AND WOULD IN ADDITION ASSUME POSITIONS IN BAABDA. THESE MOVES TOGETHER WOULD FREE LEBANESE ARMY UNITS FOR OTHER PURPOSES. NO (REPEAT NO) CHANGE WAS PROPOSED IN THE ROLE OF THE UK CONTINGENT.

3. FARES CONTINUED THAT THE SECOND PHASE OF THE PROPOSED RE-DEPLOYMENT WOULD COINCIDE WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECURITY PLAN (PARA 1 ABOVE). IN THIS PHASE THE ITALIANS WOULD DEPLOY TO THE AREA OF MOUNT LEBANON BETWEEN BEIRUT AND THE MADFUN BRIDGE, THE FRENCH ON THE ROAD BETWEEN BEIRUT AND SHTOURA TO THE EAST, AND

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A SUGGESTION TO THIS EFFECT HAD BEEN MADE. IT WOULD ONLY APPEAR TO MAKE SENSE IF AN AMERICAN PRESENCE AT BAABDA WAS TO LINK UP WITH THE EXISTING US POSITIONS AT THE AIRPORT - A VERY RISKY AND PROVOCATIVE MOVE IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES: WE ARE INVESTIGATING FURTHER TO SEE IF THE LEBANESE ARE SERIOUSLY SUGGESTING THIS.

7. **COMMENT.** IF THESE LEBANESE PROPOSALS REFLECT A CONSIDERED ATTEMPT TO RESPOND TO THE CURRENT ANXIETIES OF MNF CONTRIBUTOR GOVERNMENTS ABOUT THE SECURITY OF THEIR CONTINGENTS, AND TO PRE-EMPT FURTHER UNILATERAL RE-DEPLOYMENTS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME OFFERING A SAFER AND MORE CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE FOR THE MNF IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 'SECURITY PLAN', THEN THIS MAY BE FOR THE GOOD. BUT CONSIDERABLE FURTHER PROBING OF LEBANESE INTENTIONS IS NECESSARY BEFORE CONSIDERED COMMENT OR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM HERE ARE POSSIBLE. MEANWHILE THE PROPOSALS ARE LIKELY TO LEAK. SO COMMANDER BRITFORLEB AND I ARE URGENTLY CONSULTING OUR COLLEAGUES, ALL OF WHOM APPEARED TO BE GENUINELY SURPRISED BY THE SCOPE OF THE PROPOSALS. COMMANDER BRITFORLEB IS REPORTING IN MORE DETAIL ON HIS OWN CHANNELS (PARTICULARLY ON FARES AND THE PRESIDENT'S SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVED COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS. I SHALL REPORT FURTHER WHEN I HAVE MADE A MORE THOROUGH ASSESSMENT OF THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS.

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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
SIR J LEAHY
MR WRIGHT
MR CARTLEDGE
MR MACINNES
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THE AMERICANS ALONG THE COAST BETWEEN BEIRUT AND SIDON. AGAIN NO (REPEAT NO) CHANGE WAS SUGGESTED IN BRITFORLEB'S ROLE. (COMMENT: APART FROM THIS LATTER POINT, THESE PHASE 2 DEPLOYMENTS, WHICH THE LEBANESE AT ONE STAGE ADMITTED WERE ONLY FOR THE LONG TERM BROADLY REFLECT IDEAS WHICH WERE CURRENT BEFORE THE SHOUF FIGHTING OF LAST SEPTEMBER WHEN SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS WERE BEING DISCUSSED FOR A FURTHER PERIOD FOLLOWING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL.)

4. THE PRESIDENT THEN INVITED QUESTIONS AND COMMENT. ALL FOUR AMBASSADORS SAID THAT ANY RE-DEFINITION OF THE MNF ROLE WOULD NEED TO BE CLEARED WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS. IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS, THE PRESIDENT MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE ONLY CHANGE IN THE EXISTING EXCHANGES OF LETTERS WOULD BE THE REPLACEMENT OF 'THE BEIRUT AREA' BY 'MOUNT LEBANON AND THE COASTAL REGION' IN THE PASSAGES DESCRIBING THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA IN WHICH THE MNF OPERATE. NO (REPEAT NO) CHANGE IN THE POLITICAL OBJECTIVE OR ROLE OF THE MNF WOULD BE EXPECTED. NOR WAS IT CONSIDERED THAT THIS CHANGE NEED AFFECT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASE 1 OF THE PROPOSED RE-DEPLOYMENT. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR SAID THAT PHASE 1 WAS ACCEPTABLE BUT HE WOULD NEED TO CONSULT HIS GOVERNMENT ABOUT PHASE 2. MY US AND ITALIAN COLLEAGUES POINTED OUT THAT THEY COULD NOT AGREE EITHER THE PHASE 1 OR 2 PROPOSALS WITHOUT CONSULTING THEIR GOVERNMENTS. THE ITALIANS SAID THEY COULD NOT TAKE ON THE SOUK AND HOTEL AREAS AS WELL AS THE SABRA AND SHATILA CAMPS WITHOUT MORE MEN (COMMENT: THEY SUBSEQUENTLY MADE IT CLEAR TO ME THAT THEY WERE VERY SUSPICIOUS OF THIS PROPOSED RE-DEPLOYMENT. IF THEY GAVE UP THEIR PROTECTIVE ROLE AT SABRA AND SHATILA, THEY MIGHT BE MORE RATHER THAN LESS VULNERABLE, FOR POLITICAL REASONS, IN THEIR NEW POSITIONS AROUND THE SOUK AND HOTELS. THEY FEARED THAT THE LEBANESE MIGHT WISH TO GET THEM OUT OF THE WAY IN ORDER TO TRY TO ASSERT CONTROL OVER AREAS OF THE SOUTHERN SUBURBS.)

5. I ASKED HOW THE PROPOSED RE-DEPLOYMENTS WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE SECURITY PLAN. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT IN PHASE 1 LEBANESE FORCES WOULD BE FREED FOR MORE TASKS, EG PATROLLING ALONG THE GREEN LINE. IN PHASE 2 IT WAS ENVISAGED THAT THE MNF CONTINGENTS WOULD ACT, IN THEIR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS, IN SUPPORT OF THE LEBANESE ARMED FORCES ('AS NOW'), THUS ENABLING THE LATTER TO BE SPREAD MORE WIDELY WHERE IT WAS NECESSARY TO TAKE ON THEIR NEW ROLE UNDER THE SECURITY PLAN.

6. BOTH THE ITALIAN AND US AMBASSADORS, TO WHOM I SPOKE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE MEETING, SAID THEY HAD NO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF THESE LEBANESE PROPOSALS. THE ITALIAN WAS VERY SCEPTICAL (SEE ABOVE). THE AMERICAN SAID THAT HIS FIRST NEED WAS TO FIND OUT 'WHAT WAS BEHIND THIS'. HE HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED ON THE PROPOSAL FOR DEPLOYMENT TO DAARDA, NOR ON THE SUGGESTION THAT THE AMERICANS MIGHT PLAY A ROLE HELPING PREVENT INFILTRATION FROM THE SHOUF INTO THE SOUTHERN-SUBURBS (AT THE MEETING OF MILITARY COMMANDERS IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THAT OF THE COORDINATION COMMITTEE