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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TEL NO 003 OF 4 JANUARY 1984

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON PARIS ROME BEIRUT TEL AVIV

DAMASCUS

INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW CAIRO THE HAGUE

YOUR TELNO 928: LEBANON

1. AS REPORTED IN MY TELNO 1724, I WELCOME THE IDEA OF A PRIME MINISTERIAL MESSAGE WHICH WOULD FIT IN WELL WITH THE HIGHER PROFILE REACTION TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S REMARKS TO WHICH YOU REFERRED IN YOUR TELNO 923. SUCH A MESSAGE WOULD, I BELIEVE, ENCOURAGE THE SECRETARY GENERAL TO CONTINUE TO EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR AN EXPANDED UN PEACE KEEPING ROLE IN LEBANON. MIFT-CONTAINS A SUGGESTED DRAFT. WHAT FOLLOWS ELABORATES ON THE CONTEXT IN WHICH I SEE SUCH A MESSAGE BEING SENT.

2. AS SET OUT IN MY TELNO 1723, THE SECRETARY GENERAL IS NOT, UNFORTUNATELY, IN A POSITION, AT PRESENT, TO BRING ABOUT AN EXPANDED UN ROLE. IN HIS REMARKS TO THE PRESS ON 21 DECEMBER (MY TELNO 1714) AND TO MYSELF ON 22 DECEMBER (MY TELNO 1717,) HE LISTED THE FOUR CONDITIONS WHICH WERE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO HIM TO BE ABLE TO ACT. THESE WERE A REQUEST FROM THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT: THE APPROVAL OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL: THE SUPPORT OF THE UN TROOP CONTRIBUTORS: AND THE SUPPORT OF THE "INTERESTED COUNTRIES." THESE CONDITIONS ARE NOT MET AT PRESENT. IN PARTICULAR, THE SOUNDINGS OF THE DUTCH PRESIDENCY IN DECEMBER (MY TELNO 1722) SHOWED PRETTY CONCLUSIVELY THAT WHILE THEIR POSITIONS ARE NOT IDENTICAL NEITHER THE SYRIANS NOR THE RUSSIANS ARE PREPARED TO AGREE TO AN EXPANDED UN ROLE, WHETHER OF UN OBSERVERS OR OF UN FORCES, IN LEBANON IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. BOTH OF THEM INSISTED THAT A POLITICAL SOLUTION HAD TO COME FIRST, AND MY SOVIET COLLEAGUE ALSO SAID EMPHATICALLY THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE NOT GOING TO DO ANYTHING TO HELP THE AMERICANS. THE SECRETARY GENERAL (DESPITE WHAT HE SAID AT ONE POINT IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE), ACCEPTS THAT THERE IS NO WAY FOR THE MOMENT OF GETTING ROUND THE SYRIAN/SOVIET ROADBLOCK IN TERMS OF UN PROCEDURES OR MANOEUVRES.

3. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT I CONCLUDED IN MY TELNO 1723 THAT WE HAD BETTER TRY ANOTHER ROAD AND THAT THIS SHOULD BE A DIPLOMATIC EFFORT, OUTSIDE THE UN TO BEGIN WITH, TO PROMOTE SYRIAN/ISRAELI AGREEMENT ON WITHDRAWING THEIR TROOPS FROM LEBANON. AFTER REFLECTING ON THIS FURTHER OVER THE HOLIDAY, AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE VARIOUS VALID COMMENTS FROM WASHINGTON, TEL AVIV AND BEIRUT IN THE INTERVAL, I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE APPROACH WHICH I OUTLINED IN MY TUR OFFERS SOME HOPE OF SOLVING THE PROBLEM IN WHICH WE AND OUR MNF PARTNERS FIND OURSELVES IN LEBANON. THE INCREASING DOMESTIC PRESSURES ON PRESIDENT REAGAN TO WITHDRAW THE US MARINES MAY MAKE THE AMERICANS MORE RECEPTIVE TO SUCH AN IDEA. **CONFIDENTIAL** 14.

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4. MY IDEA IS THAT THE THREE EUROPEAN MNF COUNTRIES SHOULD TAKE THE DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE, KEEPING THE AMERICANS INFORMED AS APPROPRIATE. THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE POSSIBLE DIPLOMATIC MECHANISMS FOR EFFECTING SUCH AN INITIATIVE - NORMAL EMBASSY CHANNELS; DESPATCH OF A EUROPEAN SPECIAL EMISSARY; OR PRESSING THE SECRETARY GENERAL TO UNDERTAKE SUCH AN EMISSARY ROLE. THE FIRST OF THESE IS IMPORTANT BUT NOT ENOUGH BY ITSELF. THE SECOND AND THIRD ARE NOT EXCLUSIVE AND COULD USEFULLY BE USED IN COMBINATION.

5. THE COINCIDENCE OF THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY SUGGESTS THAT THE FRENCH (WHO HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF THE WAYS OF THE SYRIANS AND LEBANESE) MIGHT BE ASKED TO TAKE THE LEAD IN SUCH A VENTURE (WITH CLOSE INVOLVEMENT BY THE ITALIANS AND OURSELVES). THE FIRST STEP, AFTER THINKING IT ALL THROUGH OURSELVES, WOULD BE TO APPROACH THE FRENCH AND ITALIANS TO GET THEIR AGREEMENT. CAREFUL THOUGHT WOULD NEED TO BE GIVEN AT THE SAME TIME AS TO HOW TO CLEAR OUR LINES WITH THE AMERICANS. CLEARLY THEY WILL BE RELUCTANT TO BE UPSTAGED IN ANY WAY, BUT SINCE THEY ARE UNDERTAKING AN INDEPENDENT INITIATIVE THEMSELVES I HOPE THAT THEY WOULD NOT OBJECT TO THE EUROPEANS DOING LIKEWISE. THEY MAY AGREE THAT WE ARE IN SOME RESPECT BETTER PLACED THAN THEY TO AVOID AUTOMATIC SYRIAN AND SOVIET OPPOSITION. AND AS REGARDS THE UN DIMENSION PARA 7 OF WASHINGTON TEL NO 3382 IS ENCOURAGING.

6. THE AIM OF THE EUROPEAN INITIATIVE WOULD BE TO PROMOTE A PACKAGE SOLUTION TO THE LEBANON PROBLEM, INCORPORATING AN EXPANDED UN ROLE, AND INVOLVING A DEAL BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SYRIA (WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE NEGOTIATED INDIRECTLY BETWEEN THEM). THIS WOULD OBVIOUSLY MEAN TAKING SOUNDINGS IN DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV, BEIRUT, KEEPING THE AMERICANS CLOSELY IN TOUCH AND SPEAKING ALSO TO THE RUSSIANS. THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S SUPPORT SHOULD BE ENLISTED. HE COULD BE ENCOURAGED, FOR EXAMPLE, TO SEND URQUHART TO THE REGION TO HELP PROVIDE A CROSS CHECK ON THE POSITIONS OF THE PARTIES AND TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO REACT SENSIBLY. AS I SUGGESTED IN MY TELNO 1723, ONCE SUCH A PROCESS APPEARED TO BE APPROACHING AN AGREEMENT, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO BOUNCE THE PARTICIPANTS INTO FINAL AGREEMENT THROUGH SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION. RATIFICATION BY THE COUNCIL WOULD IN ANY CASE BE NECESSARY IF AN EXPANDED ROLE FOR THE UN WERE INVOLVED. THE THREE WESTERN EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL COULD PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE COUNCIL, BASING THEMSELVES PERHAPS ON THE KIND OF RESOLUTION IN MY TELNO 895. IF THE SYRIANS ACQUIESCED THE SOVIETS MIGHT WELL FOLLOW SUIT. IN SPEAKING WITH ME MY SOVIET COLLEAGUE MADE A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN A ROLE FOR THE UN IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND ALTERNATIVELY AS PART OF A PACKAGE INVOLVING THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN FORCES FROM THE LEBANON.

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7. THE EXACT ROLE FOR UN OBSERVERS/FORCES WOULD EMERGE DURING NEGOTIATIONS. TEL AVIV TELNO 351 (AND BEIRUT TELNO 747) OUTLINED SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES, THOUGH I BELIEVE THAT SOME SORT OF UN ROLE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WILL EVENTUALLY PROVE NECESSARY FOR ANY PACKAGE. IN ORDER TO US TO BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO DEFINING POSSIBLE EXPANDED UN ROLES IN LEBANON - AND THEY WILL NEED VERY CAREFUL DEFINITION - IT WOULD PERHAPS BE HELPFUL IF THE DEPARTMENT COULD PREPARE A LIST GOING INTO SOME DETAIL ON THE POSSIBILITIES. I COULD THEN DISCUSS THIS LIST INFORMALLY WITH URQUHART TO GET HIS REACTIONS. ONE ELEMENT WOULD BE, OF COURSE, THE REPLACEMENT OF THE MNF CONTINGENTS NOW IN BEIRUT.

8. IN PUTTING FORWARD THE ABOVE IDEAS, I REMAIN AS I SAID IN MY TELNO 1723, VERY DIFFIDENT. I AM CONSCIOUS OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF SEEING THE WHOLE PICTURE FROM HERE. BUT THE QUESTION REMAINS WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES? CAN WE CONTINUE TO LEAVE THE DIPLOMATIC SIDE PRIMARILY TO THE AMERICANS: WILL NOT THE SOVIETS AUTOMATICALLY BLOCK ANY US SCHEME UNLESS THEY ARE THEMSELVES GIVEN A ROLE? I SUBMIT THAT IT IS WORTH TRYING TO BRING ABOUT A SYRIAN/ISRAELI AGREEMENT IN WHICH THE SUPER POWERS CAN ACQUIESCE. THE EUROPEANS ARE BETTER PLACED AND BETTER QUALIFIED TO DO THIS THAN ANYONE ELSE, AND THE MODERATE ARABS WOULD WELCOME IT.

9. THE SECRETARY GENERAL WOULD HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN CONSTRUCTING A PACKAGE. IT WILL AT A MINIMUM BE HELPFUL TO KEEP HIM IN PLAY. A FIRST STEP WOULD BE TO ENCOURAGE HIM TO EXERT A HELPFUL INFLUENCE (THOUGH WITHOUT, AS I HAVE INDICATED ABOVE, HAVING FALSE EXPECTATIONS THAT HE CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING ON HIS OWN AT THIS STAGE). THE DRAFT PRIME MINISTERIAL MESSAGE IN MIFT WOULD PROVIDE SUITABLE WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO HIM. I ASSUME THAT YOU WERE THINKING OF KEEPING IT CONFIDENTIAL THOUGH I WOULD SEE NO DIFFICULTY IN REFERRING PUBLICLY TO IT IN GENERAL TERMS IF THIS SEEMED HELPFUL, E.G. IN A PARLIAMENTARY CONTEXT.

THOMSON

MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)

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