

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES 19

IMMEDIATE

PS/MR WICE

PS/FUS

SIR J LEAHY

MR SPERTON

SIR J BULLARD

ED/ASAD

ED/ED

ED/UND

MR WRIGHT  
MR WATKINS

ADVANCE COPY  
NO 10 DOWNING STREET

CABINET OFFICE D10

ED/DEFENCE DEPT

ED/CONSULAR DEPT

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FUSD (2)

NEWS D

RESIDENT CLERK

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CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 060020Z JANUARY, 1984

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 33 OF 5 JANUARY, 1984

INFO IMMEDIATE PARIS, ROME, UKMIS NEW YORK, BEIRUT, TEL AVIV,  
DAMASCUS, MODOK ROUTINE MOSCOW, CAIRO, THE HAGUE, JEDDA.

YOUR TELNO 4 TO UKMIS NEW YORK: LEBANON

1. I CALLED ON ADMIRAL POINDEXTER, MCFARLANE'S DEPUTY, TODAY TO EXPLORE WHITE HOUSE THINKING ON THE WAY AHEAD IN LEBANON BEFORE YOU SET OUT FOR THE MIDDLE EAST.

2. POINDEXTER SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S TELEVISION INTERVIEW YESTERDAY HAD BEEN RIGHT ON THE MARK. ALTHOUGH SOME PARTS OF THE US GOVERNMENT WERE RECOMMENDING CHANGES OF POLICY, PRESIDENT REAGAN WAS DETERMINED NOT TO CUT AND RUN. IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO ACHIEVE SOME PROGRESS AND MAKE ADEQUATE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS BEFORE THE MNF COULD BE WITHDRAWN. OTHERWISE WE SHOULD BE YIELDING TO TERRORISM WHICH COULD EXPOSE US TO FURTHER ATTACKS WORLDWIDE.

3. POINDEXTER SAID THAT RECENT CONGRESSIONAL CRITICS HAD BEEN SHOOTING FROM THE HIP: THEY HAD NOT BEEN AWARE OF THE CURRENT DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY. MCFARLANE HAD SUCCEEDED YESTERDAY IN BRINGING A GROUP OF REPUBLICAN MEMBERS TO SEE THINGS THE ADMINISTRATION'S WAY. SENATOR PERCY (MY TELNO 23) HAD TOLD SHULTZ TODAY THAT HE HAD BEEN MISQUOTED. THE ADMINISTRATION'S GOAL WAS SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS BEFORE CONGRESS REASSEMBLED ON 23 JANUARY. RUMSFELD PLANNED TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON ON 22 JANUARY.

4. RUMSFELD WOULD GO TO SYRIA WHEN ASAD WAS PREPARED TO SEE HIM. JACKSON HAD TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT ASAD SEEMED TO BE RECUPERATING



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AND THAT IN HIS OPINION ASAD VERY MUCH WANTED BETTER RELATIONS  
WITH THE US. POINDEXTER THOUGHT THAT ASAD NEEDED THE US AS A LEVER  
FOR USE WITH THE RUSSIANS. HE WAS CURRENTLY IN A DIFFICULT POSITION.  
THE MNF CONTRIBUTORS WERE STANDING UP TO HIM: THE PLO HAD ESCAPED  
FROM TRIPOLI: THE ARAFAT/MUDARAK MEETING AND KING HUSSEIN'S RECALL  
OF PARLIAMENT THREATENED TO LEAVE HIM ISOLATED: THE RUSSIANS WERE  
NOT GIVING HIM FULL SUPPORT OVER LEBANON AND SYRIA FACED DIFFICULT  
ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. HE WAS THEREFORE OPTIMISTIC THAT THE TIME MIGHT  
BE RIGHT FOR SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS WITH ASAD.

5. POINDEXTER WAS ALSO QUOTE QUIETLY OPTIMISTIC UNQUOTE THAT  
AGREEMENT MIGHT BE REACHED ON THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS PROPOSED  
BY GEMAYEL (THOUGH HE ADMITTED THAT SIMILAR AMERICAN HOIES HAD  
BEEN DISAPPOINTED IN THE PAST). RUMSFELD WAS HAVING AS MUCH  
DIFFICULTY WITH GEMAYEL AS WITH ASAD OVER THIS. WHEN I SUGGESTED  
THAT SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS WERE A DIVERSION FROM GEMAYEL'S PRIMARY  
TASK OF SECURING NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, KEMP (NSC STAFF) SAID  
THAT THE TWO WENT HAND IN HAND. IT WAS NECESSARY TO AGREE SECURITY  
ARRANGEMENTS TO CREATE THE RIGHT ATMOSPHERE FOR RESUMING THE GENEVA  
TALKS. IT WAS IN NO ONE'S INTEREST TO ESCALATE THE FIGHTING.  
THERE HAD BEEN TWO ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENTS. FIRST, SINCE SHAMIR'S  
VISIT TO WASHINGTON THE ISRAELIS HAD BEEN MOVING IN THE DIRECTION  
OF FURTHER UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL IN COORDINATION WITH THE LEBANESE  
GOVERNMENT AND THE SHIA LEADERSHIP, COMBINED WITH RESUMED ATTACKS  
ON RADICAL AND TERRORIST ELEMENTS. FURTHER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL WOULD  
CONTRIBUTE TO AN EXTENSION OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE LEBANESE  
GOVERNMENT AND SEND A SIGNAL TO THE SYRIANS THAT IT WAS THEIR TURN  
TO MAKE A MOVE. SECONDLY, THE SITUATION IN THE ARAB WORLD WAS MORE  
FAVOURABLE. THE SPLIT IN THE PLO HAD ENABLED ARAB MODERATES TO  
BREAK WITH CONSENSUS POLICIES, AND HAD LEFT THE SYRIANS INCREASINGLY  
ISOLATED. IT REMAINED TO BE SEEN WHETHER RUMSFELD COULD WORK OUT  
ANYTHING WITH ASAD. BUT HE HAD A NARROW WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY TO  
DO SO. NOW WAS CERTAINLY NOT THE TIME TO PULL THE RUG OUT FROM UNDER  
HIM BY SETTING DATES FOR WITHDRAWING THE MNF.

6. ON POSSIBLE UN INVOLVEMENT, KEMP SAID THAT MRS KIRKPATRICK  
THOUGHT THIS A SERIOUS OPTION. SHE SAW THE KEY AS HOW TO PREVENT  
A SOVIET VETO. IF THE RUSSIANS FELT THAT EXTENSION OF UNIFIL'S  
MANDATE WOULD LEAD TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE MNF, THEY MIGHT ACQUIESCE

BUT IT WOULD BE A SERIOUS MISTAKE TO REMOVE OUR TRUMP CARD - THE  
MNF - NOW. POINDEXTER ADDED THAT URQUHART WOULD BE COMING TO  
WASHINGTON NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS THIS WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

7. POINDEXTER EMPHASISED, IN CONCLUSION, THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS  
RESOLUTE OVER LEBANON. I ASSURED HIM THAT WE TOO HAD NO INTENTION  
OF WITHDRAWING ON OUR OWN, OR UNTIL VIABLE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS  
COULD BE MADE.

#### COMMENT

8. POINDEXTER'S QUALIFIED OPTIMISM MAY BE MISPLACED. THE US  
INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY IN PARTICULAR ARE SCEPTICAL OF GEMAYEL'S  
READINESS TO MAKE THE NECESSARY CONCESSIONS IN ORDER TO REACH  
AGREEMENT WITH HIS OPPONENTS. BUT I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT HE IS RIGHT



