

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES 16

PS  
PS/ME WCE  
PS/FUS  
SIR J LEAHY  
MR SPERTON  
SIR J BULLARD  
ED/REKAD  
ED/ROD  
ED/UMD

~~NO 10 DOWNING STREET~~

CABLEST OFFICE D10

ED/CONSULAR DEPT

... ..  
... ..

FUSD (2)  
NEWS D  
RESIDENT CLERK

RR CAIRO

RR MOSCOW

IMMEDIATE

ms

GRS 1200

CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 162350Z JAN 84

ADVANCE COPY

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 165 OF 16 JANUARY

INFO PRIORITY PARIS, ROME, BEIRUT, DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV,  
ROUTINE UKMIS NEW YORK, AMMAN, JEDDA, CAIRO, MOSCOW.

MY TELNO 155: LEBANON

1. MINISTER CALLED ON MURPHY TODAY TO TAKE STOCK.
2. MURPHY SAID THAT RUMSFELD PLANNED TO BRIEF MNF PARTNERS IN CAPITALS ON 19/20 JANUARY BEFORE RETURNING TO WASHINGTON. HE HOPED TO CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER. HE HAD ASKED THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO PREPARE COMMENTS ON OUR PAPER ON UN OPTIONS (YOUR TELNO 67) BEFORE HIS VISIT TO LONDON AND MURPHY UNDERTOOK TO TRY TO KEEP US ABREAST OF THEIR THINKING ON THIS AS IT DEVELOPED. RUMSFELD'S OWN VIEW WAS THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE MNF IN BEIRUT WAS A VALUABLE BARGAINING CHIP WITH THE SYRIANS AND RUSSIANS WHO SHOULD BE MADE TO PAY AS HIGH A PRICE AS POSSIBLE FOR ITS WITHDRAWAL. MURPHY THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT THAT A UN OPERATION IN BEIRUT SHOULD NOT BE SET IN HAND PREMATURELY: IT WAS IMPORTANT TO THINK OUT POSSIBLE UN DEPLOYMENT IN OTHER AREAS OF LEBANON AS WELL.
3. THOMAS ASKED ABOUT CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF THE MARINES. MURPHY THOUGHT THIS UNLIKELY TO COME TO A HEAD IN THE NEXT SESSION OF CONGRESS (23 JANUARY TO 10 FEBRUARY). IT WAS NOT CLEAR

~~3. THOMAS ASKED ABOUT CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF THE MARINES. MURPHY THOUGHT THIS UNLIKELY TO COME TO A HEAD IN THE NEXT SESSION OF CONGRESS (23 JANUARY TO 10 FEBRUARY).~~ IT WAS NOT CLEAR THAT THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WANTED EARLY WITHDRAWAL OF THE MARINES: MARINES' RECRUITMENT HAD IMPROVED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE 23 OCTOBER BOMBING. IN BRIEFINGS ON THE HILL, THE ADMINISTRATION WERE MAKING USE OF PRIVATE ADVICE FROM MODERATE ARABS THAT THE MNF SHOULD STAY WHERE IT WAS. IT WAS IMPORTANT NOT TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE US WAS ON THE RUN. THE ADMINISTRATION NEEDED TO DO A BETTER JOB OF EXPLAINING THE MARINES' MISSION. AS THE PRESIDENT HAD SAID, THEY WOULD BE WITHDRAWN WHEN WITHDRAWAL OF OTHER FOREIGN FORCES WAS ESTABLISHED, (IE NOT NECESSARILY COMPLETED) AND SECURITY ASSURED. IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO BE MORE PRECISE.

4. MURPHY SAID THAT IT SEEMED THAT THE SYRIANS NOW WANTED AGREEMENT ON THE SECURITY PLAN, BUT NO PROGRESS BEYOND THAT UNTIL THE 17 MAY AGREEMENT WAS ABROGATED. THEY CLAIMED THAT BOTH JUMBLATT AND BERRI HAD SIGNED THE SECURITY AGREEMENT. IN THEIR VIEW IT WAS NOW UP TO THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO TIE UP THE DETAILS. MURPHY THOUGHT IT CONCEIVABLE THAT THIS MIGHT BE DONE QUOTE DURING THE COMING DAYS UNQUOTE. KHADDAM WOULD BE MEETING THE LEBANESE AND SAUDI FOREIGN MINISTERS IN THE MARGINS OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE THIS WEEK. MORE NEGOTIATION WITH JUMBLATT WOULD BE REQUIRED WHEN HE RETURNED FROM MOSCOW TOWARDS THE END OF THE WEEK. IF THE SECURITY PLAN COULD BE IMPLEMENTED IT WOULD BE A CONSIDERABLE STEP FORWARD WHICH MIGHT ITSELF OPEN THE WAY FOR FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARDS NATIONAL RECONCILIATION.

5. THOMAS ASKED ABOUT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TO THE SECURITY PLAN. MURPHY SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE THE DIS-ORGANISATION OF THE LEBANESE BUREAUCRACY. NO ONE TRUSTED ANYONE ELSE AND NOTHING WAS WRITTEN DOWN. IT WAS INCAPABLE OF CONDUCTING COMPLICATED NEGOTIATIONS EFFICIENTLY. BUT GEMAYEL HAD APPROVED THE PLAN, OVER-RULING THE OBJECTIONS OF GENERAL TANNOUS. IT WAS TRUE THAT THE MOSLEM-DOMINATED ISF WAS NOT A COMPETENT FORCE. BUT FOR THAT VERY REASON IT WAS WIDELY ACCEPTABLE AND COULD PLAY A USEFUL ROLE.

6. MURPHY SAID THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO TAKE SWIFT ADVANTAGE OF BERRI'S SIGNATURE ON THE SECURITY DOCUMENT BEFORE MORE RADICAL ELEMENTS DOMINATED THE SHIA COMMUNITY. THE SHIA WERE INTENSELY SUSPICIOUS OF THE ISRAELIS AS WELL AS THE US AND LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, AND FEARED THAT THEY WERE COLLUDING IN PARTITION, WHICH WOULD AFFECT THE SHIA COMMUNITY MOST. THE ISRAELIS HAD HAD NO SUCCESS IN WINNING SHIA HEARTS AND MINDS IN THE SOUTH WHERE TEMPER WERE RISING. IN BEIRUT THE RADICAL IRANIAN QUOTE AFFILIATES UNQUOTE WERE OUT OF EVERYONE'S CONTROL AND WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE TO BE ROOTED OUT AND EXTERMINATED. THE SYRIANS WERE WRONG TO SHRUG THEIR ACTIVITIES OFF AS LEBANESE PATRIOTISM: THESE TERRORISTS OWED THEIR PRESENCE IN BEIRUT TO STATE SUPPORT, NOT LEAST FROM THE SYRIANS WHO TURNED A BLIND EYE TO THEIR PASSAGE OF THE MOUNTAINS.

7. THOMAS ASKED HOW THE STATE DEPARTMENT JUDGED SYRIAN OBJECTIVES IN THE LIGHT OF RUMSFELD'S VISIT TO DAMASCUS. MURPHY THOUGHT THAT THEIR ONLY CLEAR DECISION HAD BEEN TO ALLOW THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS TO GO AHEAD, PRIMARILY BECAUSE THEIR LEBANESE ALLIES WANTED THEM. A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY WAS STILL HOSTAGE

~~ARRANGEMENTS TO GO AHEAD, PRIMARILY BECAUSE THEIR LEBANESE ALLIES WANTED THEM. A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY WAS STILL HOSTAGE TO ABROGATION OF THE 17 MAY AGREEMENT, THOUGH THERE WAS A GLIMMER OF HOPE THAT THE SYRIANS MIGHT PROVE MORE FLEXIBLE OVER THIS THAN HAD AT ONE STAGE SEEMED LIKELY. THEY HAD ASKED RUMSFELD QUOTE WHAT HE HAD IN MIND UNQUOTE, IMPLYING THAT THEY MIGHT BE UNACCEPTABLE IN PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS ON SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AND WITHDRAWAL. RUMSFELD WOULD PROBABLY RETURN TO DAMASCUS AFTER HIS TALKS IN WASHINGTON. HE HAD BEEN MAKING IT CLEAR TO THE SYRIANS THAT THEY COULD NOT OBTAIN ALL THEY WANTED AND THAT SOME COMPROMISE WOULD BE REQUIRED. THOUGH THE SYRIANS WERE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH GEMAYEL AS PRESIDENT, THEY STILL SAW HIM AS REPRESENTING PRIMARILY THE PHALANGISTS. BUT MURPHY DID NOT THINK THAT THE SYRIANS HAD ANY ALTERNATIVE PRESIDENT OF LEBANON IN MIND: THEY WOULD DEAL WITH ANY LEBANESE PROVIDED THAT HE RESPECTED SYRIAN INTERESTS. RUMSFELD HAD ASSURED THE SYRIANS THAT THE US RESPECTED THEIR LEGITIMATE INTERESTS IN LEBANON: THIS POINT COULD USEFULLY BE FLESHED OUT IN HIS FURTHER TALKS WITH THEM.~~

8. THOMAS SUGGESTED THAT THE SYRIANS MIGHT BE CONCLUDING FROM THE POLITICAL NOISES COMING FROM ISRAEL THAT THE SITUATION THERE MIGHT LIKELY TO CHANGE IN THEIR FAVOUR. MURPHY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MANY ISRAELIS, INCLUDING SENIOR ARMY COMMANDERS, WANTED TO GET OUT OF LEBANON QUICKLY. THOUGH THE GOVERNMENT WAS IN DIFFICULTIES, IT WAS BY NO MEANS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION THAT IT WOULD FALL. MOREOVER, WHAT EVER PERES MIGHT SAY ABOUT GETTING OUT OF LEBANON, THE LABOUR OPPOSITION HAD CRITICISED THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS IN THE 17 MAY AGREEMENT AS INADEQUATE. THEY WANTED THE TERRITORIAL BRIGADE TO BE UNDER ISRAELI CONTROL AND GREATER FREEDOM FOR THE IDF TO PATROL IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. THIS WOULD BE A GREAT DEAL WORSE FROM THE SYRIAN POINT OF VIEW THAN THE PRESENT ISRAELI GOVERNMENT'S POLICY. MURPHY THOUGHT THAT IN VIEW OF THE LONG HISTORY OF PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKES THE SYRIANS MUST BE UNCERTAIN AS TO ISRAELI INTENTIONS AND THAT THERE COULD BE NO CONFIDENCE IN DAMASCUS THAT TIME WAS CLEARLY ON THEIR SIDE. THE SYRIANS DID NOT LIKE BEING SEEN AS SOVIET PUPPETS AND WERE INTRIGUED BY THE PROSPECT OF A LESS CONFRONTATIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH WASHINGTON.

9. THOMAS ASKED WHAT MURPHY THOUGHT THE FRENCH WERE UP TO. WE HAD NOT BEEN BRIEFED ON M GROSSOUVRE'S RECENT VISIT TO DAMASCUS. MURPHY SAID THAT ACCORDING TO THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS M GROSSOUVRE HAD BROUGHT NO NEW IDEAS. THE DESK OFFICER FOR SYRIA ADDED THAT THE VISIT DID NOT SEEM TO HAVE GONE WELL: THE SYRIANS HAD NOT BEEN FORTHCOMING AND HAD COMPLAINED ABOUT FRENCH BOMBING OF THEIR POSITIONS IN LEBANON. (BUT THE FRENCH EMBASSY HERE HAVE COMMENTED TO US PRIVATELY THAT THE QUAI D'ORSAY OFTEN KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT RUMSFELD IS DOING THAN WHAT THE ELYSEE IS UP TO.)

10. MURPHY COULD NOT RECALL ANY RECENT US/FRENCH EXCHANGES ON LEBANON (HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM LEAVE AND MAY NOT HAVE BEEN FULLY IN THE PICTURE). THE FRENCH HAD CLAIMED THAT THEY WERE NOT WAVERING BY MOVING SOME OF THEIR MNF CONTINGENT BACK TO UNIFIL. BUT THEY WERE BEING UNUSUALLY RELUCTANT TO ENGAGE IN CONSULTATION WITH THEIR MNF PARTNERS. THEY LIKE US SEEMED TO BE THINKING OF WAYS OF MOVING THE UN TO CENTRE STAGE. MURPHY REPEATED THAT THE MNF WAS AN INTENSE IRRITANT TO DAMASCUS AND THAT A HIGH

~~CONSULTATION WITH THEIR MNF PARTNERS. THEY LIKE US SEEMED TO BE  
THINKING OF WAYS OF MOVING THE UN TO CENTRE STAGE. MURPHY REPEATED  
THAT THE MNF WAS AN INTENSE IRRITANT TO DAMASCUS AND THAT A HIGH  
PRICE SHOULD BE EXACTED FOR ITS WITHDRAWAL. THOMAS TOOK THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO EMPHASISE ONCE AGAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF RUMSFELD'S  
KEEPING CLOSELY IN TOUCH WITH EUROPEAN CONTRIBUTORS TO THE MNF.~~

WRIGHT

NNNN