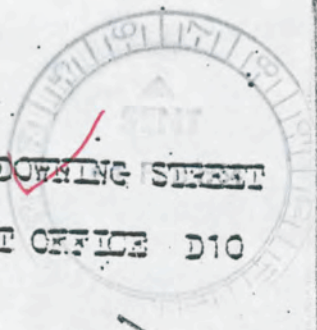


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YOUR TELNO 193: SHUWEIFAT GAP

1. MINISTER TOOK ACTION THIS EVENING WITH RAPHEL (NEWLY APPOINTED DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS) IN MURPHY'S ABSENCE. THOMAS RE-EMPHASISED THE POINTS WHICH YOU AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAD PUT TO RUMSFELD ON 20 JANUARY AND URGED STRONGLY THAT RUMSFELD SHOULD NOW BE INSTRUCTED TO DISSUADE GEMAYEL FROM TAKING ACTION TO CLOSE THE GAP. HE LEFT RAPHEL IN NO DOUBT THAT IF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WENT AHEAD WITHOUT CONSULTATION, WE WOULD HAVE TO RECONSIDER OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE MNF. THOMAS SAID THAT PARALELL ACTION WAS BEING TAKEN IN BEIRUT AND THAT THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN GOVERNMENTS WERE BEING INFORMED AND URGED TO MAKE SIMILAR REPRESENTATIONS TO THE LEBANESE.

2. RAPHEL SAID THAT THE AMERICANS HAD HEARD SIMILAR REPORTS TO THOSE THAT WERE CAUSING US CONCERN BUT HAD NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WERE ACTUALLY PLANNING A MOVE. THERE WERE RUMOURS ABOUT THEIR INTENTIONS BUT NOTHING HAD BEEN SUBSTANTIATED. THE ADMINISTRATION WERE STILL CONSIDERING WHAT ACTION TO TAKE AND A DECISION WAS IMMINENT. BUT AS OF 2220Z TODAY NO DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN. RAPHEL UNDERTOOK TO