

SECRET

PRIME MINISTER

I attach a letter which I propose to send to the Ministry of Defence, in answer to an enquiry from John Stanley about the possibility of decisions being needed on the MNF while you are in Hungary.

Are you content with the letter, in particular paragraph 4 which answers John Stanley's questions as to the extent to which you wish to delegate decisions on the Lebanon during your absence?

A.J.C.

I agree the
terms of this letter. The
most important thing is

1 February, 1984. That the decisions
are taken in time for
our local commanders
to take the necessary action
me

SECRET



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 February, 1984.

The Lebanon

Thank you for your letter of 1 February about the possibility of tension in the Lebanon during the Prime Minister's absence in Hungary, arising from a possible move by the Lebanese Government to close the "Shuwayfat gap". I have consulted the Prime Minister who has asked me to reply in the following sense.

First, you will be aware of the details of the Prime Minister's movements (Mr. Heseltine's Private Office confirmed to me this afternoon that they have received the usual note on administrative arrangements). The Prime Minister leaves the House of Commons at 3.45 on 2 February for Heathrow Airport. She reaches Budapest at 2030 local time (1930 London time). Between ~~then~~ and about 0830 (0730) on Saturday, 4 February, she will be in Budapest. From 0830 (0730) until 1400 (1300) on 4 February she will be visiting places outside Budapest. From 1400 (1300) until 1720(1620) she will be in Budapest. Take-off for the return journey is at 1800 (1700) with arrival at Heathrow at 1940 London time.

On this occasion there will be no secure voice communications between London and Budapest, and it must be assumed that all telephone conversations will be heard by the Hungarians and/or Russians. The only secure means of communication will be by telegram.

In general, and if time permits, the Prime Minister would wish to be consulted in her absence about all major decisions *affecting* involving a change of policy on the multinational force. She would be grateful if the Defence Secretary and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary could keep a close eye on the situation you describe, and if necessary let her have their joint recommendations on action to be taken. If time does not permit this, or the Prime Minister cannot be contacted, she would be grateful if, in consultation with Lord Whitelaw, Sir Geoffrey Howe

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/ and

and Mr. Heseltine would take such decisions as they think appropriate. *The Prime Minister considers that the most important point is that decisions should be taken in time & BE INFORMED to take the necessary action.*
Telephone conversations will best be conducted through the No.10 switchboard.

The No.10 Private Office should be kept informed. The Duty Officer on the evening of Friday and on Saturday will be Mr. Flesher.

Clearly, the period of maximum difficulties of communications should be that when the Prime Minister is outside Budapest (see above). The Embassy in Budapest will be able to send messages to the Prime Minister by car during this period, and ~~would be able~~ to give an estimate of how long it would take to deliver a message.

I am sending copies of this letter to Peter Ricketts (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence), Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

A.S.C.

P.M.W. Francis, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 February 1984

Dear Sir,

The Lebanon

Thank you for your letter of 1 February about the possibility of tension in the Lebanon during the Prime Minister's absence in Hungary, arising from a possible move by the Lebanese Government to close the "Shuwayfat gap". I have consulted the Prime Minister who has asked me to reply in the following sense.

First, you will be aware of the details of the Prime Minister's movements (Mr. Heseltine's Private Office confirmed to me this afternoon that they have received the usual note on administrative arrangements). The Prime Minister leaves the House of Commons at 3.45 on 2 February for Heathrow Airport. She reaches Budapest at 2030 local time (1930 London time). Between then and about 0830 (0730) on Saturday 4 February, she will be in Budapest. From 0830 (0730) until 1400 (1300) on 4 February she will be visiting places outside Budapest. From 1400 (1300) until 1720 (1620) she will be in Budapest. Take-off for the return journey is at 1800 (1700) with arrival at Heathrow at 1940 London time.

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In general, and if time permits, the Prime Minister would wish to be consulted in her absence about all major decisions affecting the multinational force. She would be grateful if the Defence Secretary and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary could keep a close eye on the situation you describe, and if necessary let her have their joint recommendations on action to be taken. If time does not permit this, or the Prime Minister cannot be contacted, she would be grateful if, in consultation with Lord Whitelaw, Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr. Heseltine would take such decisions as they think appropriate. The Prime Minister considers that the most important point is that decisions should be taken in time for BRITFORLEB to take the necessary action.

Telephone conversations will best be conducted through the No. 10 switchboard.

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/ The No. 10

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The No. 10 Private Office should be kept informed. The Duty Officer on the evening of Friday and on Saturday will be Mr. Flesher.

Clearly, the period of maximum difficulty of communications could be that when the Prime Minister is outside Budapest (see above). The Embassy in Budapest will be able to send messages to the Prime Minister by car during this period and to give an estimate of how long it would take to deliver a message.

I am sending copies of this letter to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), Peter Ricketts (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

For use

for Col.

P.M.W. Francis, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

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2.



Private Secretary to:
MINISTER OF STATE FOR
THE ARMED FORCES

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 01-218 2216 (Direct Dialling)
01-218 9000 (Switchboard)

D/MIN(AF)/JS/5/3/56

1st February 1984

Don Coles

Mr Stanley had a word with you this morning about the latest situation in the Lebanon and agreed that it would be helpful to forewarn the Prime Minister of the possible need for urgent decisions about the British MNF contingent during the period of her visit to Hungary.

The Prime Minister will have seen from the JIC assessment of 31 January that the Lebanese Government may proceed with an operation at short notice to close the "Shuwayfat gap". The Prime Minister will also have seen from Washington Telegram No 353 of 1 February that the US are making a strong demarche to the Lebanese authorities to try to dissuade them from this course. Nevertheless the risk remains significant, and action on these lines could result in a breakdown of the ceasefire and a rapid deterioration of the military situation in and around Beirut with all MNF contingents, including possibly (but by no means necessarily) our own, coming under attack. In such circumstances MOD Ministers might have to seek urgent decisions on the immediate future of BRITFORLEB, involving the partial or full implementation of one of the existing contingency plans for withdrawal.

As this could happen at short notice during the Prime Minister's absence in Hungary, Mr Stanley would be grateful if you could let us know what arrangements are available for consulting the Prime Minister during her absence abroad and whether or not she wishes to delegate decisions on the Lebanon in any way during the period of her absence.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Peter Ricketts and to Richard Hatfield.

Tom Ricketts
Philip Francis

P M W FRANCIS

A J Coles Esq
Private Secretary to Prime Minister

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MINISTRY OF DEFENSE
INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT



MINISTRY OF DEFENSE
INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT

1 FEB 1984



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PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

2 February 1984

Sve: for weekend



switch have got
these numbers.

Dear Tim,

The Lebanon

John Coles sent me a copy of his letter of 1 February to Philip Francis about the possible need for Lord Whitelaw, Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr Heseltine to consult over the weekend.

I thought that you, as the Duty Officer, might find it helpful to have the attached note of the telephone numbers on which Lord Whitelaw, Ron Lawrence and I can be contacted while the Prime Minister is away.

I am sending copies of this letter to Peter Ricketts (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Janet.

JANET A LEWIS-JONES

Tim Flesher Esq

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	Thursday 2 Feb evening	Friday 3 Feb evening	Saturday 4 Feb daytime	Saturday 4 Feb evening	Sunday 5 Feb morning
Lord Whitelaw	London 584 2862	Dorneywood 06286 4028	Dorneywood 06286 4028	Dorneywood 06286 4028	London 584 2862
Janet Lewis-Jones	home 586 4828	out 286 6550	home 586 4828	out 435 1838	home 586 4828
Ron Lawrence	home 641 4724	home 641 4724	home 641 4724	home 641 4724	home 641 4724

Lebanon Int Sit Pt 6

22 FEB 1984

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