

SECRET



file

Loc

cc MASTER.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 February 1984

LEBANON

The Prime Minister held a further meeting at 9 am this morning which was attended by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Defence Secretary, Mr. Luce, the Chief of the Defence Staff and Sir John Leahy.

The Defence Secretary reported on the latest stage in the operation to redeploy the British contingent but was not yet able to confirm that the operation was complete.

The question of the safety of the British community and the staff at HM Embassy, Beirut, was discussed. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary undertook to instruct HM Ambassador to inform the British community of the facilities which would be available for those who wished to leave the Lebanon. Contingency planning for the evacuation of those who do wish to leave was described. The Ambassador would also be invited to consider whether he wished to reduce his own staff and dependants further. Mr. Miers had pointed out in a telegram overnight that, from the point of view of the safety of his mission, it was desirable that in public comment we should not stress that the redeployment of BRITFORLEB was associated with US moves.

It was agreed that we should impress on the United States Government once more the desirability of allowing President Gemayel to abrogate the 17 May agreement. The Prime Minister stressed that it was important that the US Administration should seize quickly the opportunity which might be presented in the next few days, but which would probably disappear thereafter, for injecting new ideas into the situation. There seemed little possibility, given the present circumstances in the Lebanon, of involving the United Nations effectively. But we should bear in mind the expectation in public opinion that we would be examining all possibilities and should be ready to state that we had been in touch both continuously and very recently with the UN Secretariat about possible UN roles.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

SECRET