

GRPS 450

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DESKBY 081400Z FCO

FM BEIRUT 081300Z FEB 84

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 77 OF 8 FEBRUARY.

INFO IMMEDIATE DAMASCUS, NICOSIA, TEL AVIV, AMMAN, CAIRO  
CBFC CYPRUS.

BRITISH COMMUNITY.

1. THERE IS A COMPARATIVE LULL IN WEST BEIRUT AT PRESENT, THOUGH SPECULATION ABOUT FUTURE FIGHTING OR SHELLING IS RIFE. BRITISH SUBJECTS ARE ASKING ABOUT EVACUATION PLANS AND WE AND OTHER EMBASSIES ARE REVIEWING PLANS.
2. EVEN IF WE WANTED TO ADVISE EVACUATION AND ARRANGE THE MEANS, IT WOULD NOT BE FEASIBLE AT THIS MOMENT. OUR TELEPHONES REMAIN OUT OF ACTION (THOUGH WE ARE ARRANGING ACCESS TO ONE THAT WORKS). MOVEMENT IS RESTRICTED BY THE MILITIA CHECKPOINTS THAT HAVE MUSHROOMED AND WE ARE STILL TESTING HOW FREELY AND SAFELY ONE CAN MOVE TO VARIOUS QUARTERS. IT COULD BE DANGEROUS TO ASSEMBLE ANY LARGE CROWD OF BRITISH SUBJECT FOR EVACUATION. THE ONLY WAY TO DO THIS IN ANY CASE WOULD BE BY ADVERTISING IN THE MEDIA AND/OR THE BBC WORLD SERVICE. FOR HELICOPTERS TO COME IN (THE AIRPORT IS STILL SHUT), IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO OBTAIN THE AGREEMENT OF THE DE FACTO AUTHORITIES (WHICH WHOM WE ARE URGENTLY SEEKING TO ESTABLISH CONTACT) UNLESS IT WAS FOR AN UNADVERTISED TRIP TO PICK UP A PREARRANGED PARTY. (THE AMERICANS TOOK OFF 3 HELICOPTER LOADS OF USAID PERSONNEL THIS MORNING).
3. WE HAVE NO FIRST HAND KNOWLEDGE OF CONDITIONS IN EAST BEIRUT. A CONVOY OF OUR CHRISTIAN LOCAL STAFF WHO HAVE BEEN MAROONED HERE SINCE MONDAY WERE TURNED BACK AT THE GREEN LINE (NORTH END) THIS MORNING. IT IS POSSIBLE BUT NOT RECOMMENDABLE TO RUN A SNIPER GAUNTLET AT THE MUSEUM CROSSING. IF EVACUATION BECOMES NECESSARY FROM EAST BEIRUT I SHALL NEED TO SEND A CONSULAR PARTY THERE SOMEHOW (PREFERABLY BY HELICOPTER). I MAY IN ANY CASE NEED TO ESTABLISH AN OFFICE IN EAST BEIRUT FOR WIDER OPERATIONAL REASONS SOON.

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4. IN THE LIGHT OF THE ABOVE I AM NOT RECOMMENDING EVACUATION AT PRESENT. THE ADVICE WE ARE CURRENTLY GIVING TO BRITISH SUBJECTS IS IN MY TELNO 69. BUT WE SHALL HAVE TO KEEP THE SITUATION UNDER CLOSE AND CONSTANT REFIEW, DEPENDING PRINCIPALLY ON WHETHER FIGHTING RESUMES AND HOW LAW AND ORDER IS MAINTAINED ON THE 2 SIDE OF THE GREEN LINE.

MIERS

BT

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING ST]

MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)

LIMITED

NENAD

MED

DEFENCE DEPT

PUSD

NEWS DEPT

UND

NAD

WED

SED

ECD(E)

FINANCE DEPT

PROTOCOL DEPT

PS

PS/LADY YOUNG

PS/MR LUCE

PS/PUS

SIR J BULLARD

SIR J LEAHY

SIR W HARDING

MR WRIGHT

MR CARTLEDGE

MR MACINNES

MR ADAMS

MR JENKINS

MR EGERTON

COPIES TO:

MOD DS11

MR GOODALL )CABINET

SIR R ARMSTRONG)OFFICE

SIR P MOORE  
BUCKINGHAM PALACE

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