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DESKBY 081400Z

FM PARIS 081245Z FEB 84

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 160 OF 8 FEBRUARY

INFO BEIRUT, WASHINGTON, DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV, ROME, MODUK,
CBFC.

F C O TELNO 52 TO BEIRUT AND TELECON MACRAE/NIXON: LEBANON/MNF.

1. HEAD OF CHANCERY CALLED ON LUCET (DIRECTEUR ADJOINT) FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AT THE QUAI THIS MORNING TO COMPARE NOTES. LUCET SAID THAT (AS PREDICTED IN OUR TELEGRAM NUMBER 138) THE FRENCH ARE NOT TAKING ANY SNAP DECISIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THEIR FORCE IN LEBANON WHICH THEY DO NOT REGARD AS PARTICULARLY MORE THREATENED THAN BEFORE THE LATEST FIGHTING. RATHER, THEY ARE SITTING TIGHT FOR THE MOMENT AND TRYING TO EVALUATE A FAST-MOVING SITUATION BY KEEPING IN CLOSE TOUCH (SO FAR AS POSSIBLY) WITH ALL THE PARTIES ON THE GROUND. THE MESSAGE THEY SEEM TO BE GETTING (ESPECIALLY FROM THE SHINITES, NO DOUBT) WAS THAT THE PRESENCE OF THEIR FORCE WAS WELCOME PROVIDED THAT IT REMAINED STRICTLY NEUTRAL BETWEEN THE VARIOUS PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT. THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WERE STILL KEEN FOR THE UN TO PLAY AN ENHANCED ROLE, AS PRESIDENT MITTERRAND AGAIN UNDERLINED IN THE HAGUE YESTERDAY. BUT LUCET SAID THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE THAT THEY HAD MADE ANY NEW APPROACH TO THE UN OVER THIS IN THE LAST 24 HOURS. THE PROBLEMS WERE ONLY TOO FAMILIAR: HOW TO GET ALL THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT, THE SYRIANS, ISRAELIS, AMERICANS AND RUSSIANS, TO AGREE TO A NEW UN ROLE. OUR "BRAINSTORMING" ON THIS SUBJECT IN LONDON HAD BEEN USEFUL.

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2. LUCET SEEMED DEPRESSED BY PRESIDENT REAGAN'S STATEMENT. IT SEEMED TO HIM UNFORTUNATELY PARTIAL AND GENERALLY BEHIND THE GAME. HE SAID THAT HE DOUBTED THAT THE FRENCH WOULD BE KEEN ON A MINISTERIAL MEETING ON LEBANON: APART FROM THEIR WELL-KNOWN DOCTRINAL OBJECTIONS, THE SITUATION WAS SIMPLY MOVING TOO FAST ON THE GROUND TO MAKE SUCH A MEETING PARTICULARLY USEFUL. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FRENCH WELCOMED THE MAXIMUM OF INFORMAL CONTACT AT WORKING LEVEL WITH OTHER MNF CONTRIBUTORS AND WERE GLAD THAT WE WERE KEEPING IN SUCH CLOSE TOUCH WITH THEM.

PETRIE

MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)
LIMITED
NENAD
MED
DEFENCE DEPT
PUSD
NEWS DEPT
UND
NAD
WED
SED
ECD(E)
FINANCE DEPT
PROTOCOL DEPT
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