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FM WASHINGTON 091749Z FEB 84

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 454 OF 9 FEBRUARY

INFO IMMEDIATE BEIRUT, MODUK

PRIORITY TEL AVIV, DAMASCUS, CBFC, PARIS, ROME

LEBANON

1. GREGG (NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER TO THE VICE PRESIDENT) TOLD US TODAY THAT THE TIMING FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE FIVE HUNDRED MARINES WHO ARE TO BE MOVED TO SHIPS OFF-SHORE HAS NOT YET BEEN DECIDED. THIS AND OTHER MATTERS WILL BE CONSIDERED AT A FURTHER MEETING CHAIRED BY THE VICE PRESIDENT, WITH SHULTZ NOW ALSO IN ATTENDANCE, THIS EVENING. GREGG CONFIRMED THAT WHILE SOME (IE THE PENTAGON) WANTED TO DO THIS QUICKLY, OTHERS WERE ARGUING THAT THE RE-DEPLOYMENT SHOULD PROCEED AT A MEASURED PACE, TO PRESERVE WHAT WAS LEFT OF THE GEMAYEL GOVERNMENT AND MAINTAIN THE COHESION OF THE CORE ELEMENTS OF THE LEBANESE ARMY. THE US SHELLING OF SYRIAN GUN POSTS IN THE HILLS ABOVE BEIRUT HAD DONE SOMETHING TO HELP LAF MORALE. THE AMERICANS HAD A MODUS VIVENDI WITH BERRI IN WEST BEIRUT, THOUGH THIS WAS TENUOUS (WE POINTED OUT THAT IT COULD BE AFFECTED BY FURTHER NAVAL SHELLING).

2. GREGG CONFIRMED THAT THERE IS ALSO UNCERTAINTY ABOUT US PLANS IN THE LONGER TERM. WE KNOW FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT THE PENTAGON WANT TO GET ALL ELEMENTS OUT EXCEPT FOR A MILITARY TRAINING PRESENCE; AND THERE WILL BE STRONG CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE IF THIS IS NOT DONE. BUT A REARGUARD ACTION IS BEING FOUGHT BY THOSE WHO WANT TO MAINTAIN SOME CONTINUING PRESENCE.

3. WHATEVER THE DECISIONS TAKEN HERE IN THE SHORT-TERM, THE OUTCOME WILL BE DETERMINED MORE BY EVENTS IN AND AROUND BEIRUT. THE PRESIDENT IS COMMITTED TO THE PROGRESSIVE DISENGAGEMENT OF MOST US FORCES TO POSITIONS OFF-SHORE. THERE IS A GENERAL RECOGNITION THAT THIS PROCESS WILL HAVE TO BE ACHIEVED, AT THE LATEST, WITHIN TWO OR THREE MONTHS.

4. WE EMPHASISED TO GREGG THE NEED TO GIVE US AND OTHER MNF CONTRIBUTORS A CLEARER VIEW OF U.S. INTENTIONS AFTER THE MEETING THIS EVENING.

WRIGHT

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MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)
 LIMITED PS
 NENAD PS/LADY YOUNG
 MED PS/MR LUCE
 DEFENCE DEPT PS/PUS
 PUSD SIR J BULLARD
 NEWS DEPT SIR J LEAHY
 UND SIR W HARDING
 NAD MR WRIGHT
 WED MR CARTLEDGE
 SED MR MACINNES
 ECD(E) MR ADAMS
 FINANCE DEPT MR JENKINS
 PROTOCOL DEPT MR EGERTON

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FM WASHINGTON 092309Z FEB 84

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 466 OF 9 FEBRUARY

INFO PRIORITY PARIS, ROME, BEIRUT, DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV,
UKMIS NEW YORK, MODUK.

MIPT: LEBANON.

1. AN ARTICLE IN TODAY'S NEW YORK TIMES, QUOTING ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS, SAYS THAT, AT A MEETING WITH RUMSFELD ON 21 JANUARY, PRESIDENT REAGAN DIRECTED THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF TO DRAW UP A PLAN FOR PULLING BACK THE MARINES AND FOR INCREASED MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO GEMAYEL. GENERAL VESSEY REPORTED ON THE PLAN ON 26 JANUARY, PRESIDENT REAGAN APPROVED THE PLANNED PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL OF MARINES IN PRINCIPLE ON 1 FEBRUARY AND DECIDED TENTATIVELY TO PROCEED WITH IT AFTER REVIEWING THE SITUATION IN THE LIGHT OF DEVELOPMENTS ON 5 FEBRUARY.
2. THE ARTICLE CLAIMS THAT GEMAYEL WAS INFORMED OF THE PROPOSAL BY RUMSFELD ON 6 FEBRUARY AND AGREED TO IT. THE ADMINISTRATION HAD WANTED TO DELAY AN ANNOUNCEMENT UNTIL THE SITUATION IN BEIRUT BECAME CLEARER BUT MADE IT ON 7 FEBRUARY IN ORDER TO FORESTALL FURTHER LEAKS. THE ARTICLE NOTES THAT THROUGHOUT THIS PERIOD PRESIDENT REAGAN CONTINUED TO SAY IN PUBLIC THAT ANY LESSENING OF US RESOLVE IN LEBANON WOULD BE INTERPRETED AS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS. THE WASHINGTON POST HAS A SIMILAR STORY.
3. TEICHER (NSC STAFF) WHO WAS A PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF THIS STORY, HAS TOLD US THAT IT IS BROADLY ACCURATE. THE SITUATION IN LEBANON HAD FALLEN APART AT THE WORST POSSIBLE MOMENT SO FAR AS THE PROPOSED US PACKAGE WAS CONCERNED.

WRIGHT

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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

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Sir J Leahy
Mr Egerton
Resident Clerk, Ministry of Defence
Mr Long, Head of NENAD

LEBANON: MNF

1. As I told you on the telephone, the US Embassy delivered to the FCO at 12.30pm today a further message from Washington. Copies of this have already been sent to number 10: I attach further copies for ease of reference and copies are going to all recipients of this minute.

2. As you asked, I have consulted NENAD who have commented as follows:

- (a) The content of the message is not new: it closely reflects the content of our exchanges with the Americans during the past few days notably with Mr Richard Murphy on 8 and 9 February. Our discussions have been fully reported in the telegrams.
- (b) The latest American message reflects the US interest in our continuing to remain members of the MNF. The reference to our contingent remaining either aboard RFA Reliant or in Cyprus gives us useful operational leeway.
- (c) The message reflects the US interest in continuing close consultation among the MNF in which we have played a leading role.

/(d)

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- (d) The reference to '30 days' in the first sentence is not completely clear. The US Embassy officer who informed us of the message agreed with our tentative interpretation that it looked as if the Americans now intend to carry out within the 30 days the full programme of redeployment which they earlier foresaw as lasting until 'the Spring' or even 'the early Summer'. If so, this would reflect a slightly faster pace, no doubt in response to pressures from Congress in the last two days.
- (e) A request for help with training will be difficult. Any UK help to the LAF ought probably to be only in the context of an agreed programme of reform. Decisions on this will require attention from Ministers in the further discussion of our own future policy on the Lebanese crisis which are to be held early next week in the light of the results of the Prime Minister's discussions with Vice President Bush.

W A Harrison

W A Harrison
Resident Clerk

11 February 1984

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US POLICY IN THE LEBANON

Line to take

My Rt Hon Friend made plain yesterday:

- that we are not going to indulge in cheap anti-Americanism
- that America remains our closest and most important ally
- that we shall continue to consult closely with them and give them frank advice if and when we ~~believe they are wrong~~ ^{disagree with them}.

The House should not underestimate the complexity of the situation facing the United States and the West generally in the Lebanon. There will be many who seek to divide the Alliance now - and the Soviet Union is waiting to exploit the divisions.

Force That said, it is important that any force used in the Lebanon is limited to the needs of self-defence. Indiscriminate shelling can only worsen the situation. ^{Action going beyond that.}

Difficult as it is, the role of the West now is to use all its influence to bring an end to the present fighting and then to encourage a fresh start on the process of reconciliation. If we are to play such a role, we must not become identified with one faction in the Lebanon but seek to obtain the goodwill of all parties who are genuinely interested in reconciliation.

Hope the Syrians will commit themselves to the path of reconciliation.

On Reliant "until situation

9 February 1984

becomes clearer."

Lebanon 2
General.