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DESKBY 131530Z FCO/UKMIS NY/ WASHINGTON

FM BEIRUT 131500Z

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 119 OF 13 FEBRUARY

AND IMMEDIATE TO UKMIS NEW YORK, WASHINGTON

INFO PRIORITY PARIS, ROME, AMMAN, JEDDA, CAIRO, THE HAGUE,
TRIPOLI, MOSCOW, DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV.Prime Minister

UKMIS NEW YORK TELNO 147: LEBANON.

1. AKHUND, THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPRESENTATIVE IN LEBANON, ASKED TO SEE ME TODAY. HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL TO GIVE HIS VIEWS ON PROSPECTS FOR UN INVOLVEMENT IN BEIRUT, INCLUDING THE IDEA THAT THE UN MIGHT GUARD CROSSING POINTS ON THE GREEN LINE. HE WAS TO MAKE IT CLEAR IN THIS, IN VIEW OF THE PUBLICITY WE HAD GIVEN TO OUR ACTIVITY IN NEW YORK, THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL HAD NOT TAKEN A VIEW ON OUR PROPOSALS, LET ALONE GIVEN THEM HIS SUPPORT.

2. I EXPLAINED TO AKHUND THAT WE BELIEVED THAT A UN PRESENCE IN BEIRUT WOULD BE USEFUL. THE PROBLEM WAS THAT ALMOST ANY PROPOSAL WOULD BE OBJECTED TO BY ONE OR OTHER PARTY FOR SOME REASON. THE SYRIANS AND THE SOVIET UNION WERE BELIEVED TO BE OPPOSED TO ANY UN PRESENCE UNTIL THE MNF HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN. BUT IT SEEMED TO US THAT THERE MIGHT BE A POSSIBILITY OF OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS IF THE UN WAS ASKED IN TO FULFIL SOME SIMPLE ROLE OF OBVIOUS HUMANITARIAN VALUE, EG GUARDING CROSSING POINTS. THE FRENCH WERE NOW ENGAGED ON OPENING THESE. BUT THE FRENCH THEMSELVES WERE KNOWN TO BE INTERESTED IN A UN PRESENCE IN BEIRUT TO WHICH THEY COULD EVENTUALLY HAND OVER.

3. AKHUND SEEMED PERSONALLY INTERESTED IN THE IDEA OF THE UN PLAYING THE ROLE ENVISAGED. BUT HE IS CLEARLY AWARE OF THE DIFFICULTIES. MOREOVER, HE HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN INFORMED OF URQUHART'S VIEW (THOUGH HE DID NOT PROFESS TO SHARE IT) THAT AN ARMED UNIT, EG ONE OF THE UNMIL DETACHMENTS, COULD NOT BE DEPLOYED IN BEIRUT. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE SAID THAT THE UNTSO (OGB) OBSERVERS WERE NOT ABLE TO OPERATE AT PRESENT. THEIR VEHICLES WERE LIABLE TO SEIZURE BY MILITIAMEN. THIS PROBLEM WAS A NIGHTMARE FOR THE UN. UNICEF AND UNDP HAD ALSO HAD VEHICLES COMMANDEERED.

4. THERE HAS NOT BEEN MUCH PUBLICITY FOR OUR IDEAS HERE IN BEIRUT, THOUGH THOSE WITH AN INTEREST ARE WELL AWARE OF THEM AND THERE HAVE BEEN SOME REFERENCES IN THE PRESS TO OUR ACTIVITY IN NEW YORK. I SEE WITH MILLEAGE IN PURSUING THE CROSSING POINT IDEA FOR THE MOMENT, SINCE THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT

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DO NOT WANT THE UN IN FOR FEAR OF LOSING THE MNF (WE SHALL CHECK THIS TOMORROW), THE FRENCH WANT THEMSELVES TO EXPLOIT SUCH KUDOS AS CAN BE GAINED FROM OPENING CROSSINGS, AND THE NATIONALISTS FEAR THAT C

STALLING THE UN ON THE GREEN LINE MAY LEAD TO PERMANENT PARTITION ON THE CYPRUS MODEL (SEE MY SEPARATE TELEGRAM ON BERRI'S VIEWS). ON THE OTHER HAND, WE BELIEVE THERE MAY BE ADVANTAGE IN PURSUING THE IDEA THAT THE UN COULD USEFULLY BE BROUGHT IN TO HELP WITH SOME MODEST BUT NECESSARY TASK (IF NOT A CROSSING POINT, WHY NOT THE AIRPORT?): AND IN DUE COURSE EVEN THE FRENCH MAY BE READY TO HAND OVER CROSSING POINTS, AS WELL AS OTHER POSTS, TO THE UN.

MTERS

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