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no SUP. Craddock ①

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Prime Minister.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

You will wish to consider this. I confess to some doubts as to whether it is worth sending as the situation in Beirut deteriorates once again. Wait till Friday?

15 February 1984

Yes mt

Dear John,

A. J. C. 15/2

Lebanon

We spoke about the message from the Prime Minister to President Reagan. Sir Geoffrey Howe is content with the text of the message, as redrafted in Moscow telno 210 (copy enclosed). There is still no clear sign that the Americans have hoisted in the need to offer up the May 17 Agreement in exchange for something worthwhile while such an exchange is still possible: recent US public statements in Washington contradict Mr Rumsfeld's earlier assurances that everything, the agreement included, was up for negotiation in Damascus. Sir Geoffrey therefore agrees that, if the Prime Minister is content, a message along the lines of the enclosed draft is still worth sending to the President.

Yours ever,
Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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GRS 455
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DESKBY 140930Z
FM MOSCOW 140903Z FEB 84
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 210 OF 14 FEB

FOLLOWING FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY FOR RICKETTS

MIPT

1. FOLLOWING HIS TEXT:

WE WERE DELIGHTED TO SEE GEORGE AND BARBARA BUSH LAST WEEKEND. GEORGE AND I HAD SEVERAL GOOD LONG TALKS AND I NOW FEEL MUCH MORE UP TO DATE ON YOUR THINKING AND PREOCCUPATIONS.

WE SPENT A LOT OF TIME ON THE LEBANON AND I HAVE BEEN REFLECTING ON THAT PROBLEM SINCE. US INVOLVEMENT IN THE LEBANON IS MUCH GREATER THAN OURS AND I AM THE LAST PERSON TO INDULGE IN BACK-SEAT DRIVING. BUT I WANT TO BE AS HELPFUL AS I CAN TO YOUR EFFORTS TO FIND A WAY THROUGH THE PRESENT IMPASSE. THE FOLLOWING THOUGHTS MAY BE HELPFUL.

WE ARE AGREED THAT SYRIA IS A KEY FACTOR. WE CANNOT LET PRESIDENT ASAD DICTATE THE COURSE OF EVENTS. BUT I DOUBT IF HE WILL BE PREPARED TO WORK CONSTRUCTIVELY WITH US UNLESS HE IS OFFERED SOME INCENTIVE. EVERYTHING I HEAR LEADS ME TO BELIEVE THAT THE INCENTIVE HE NEEDS IS A NEW UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE 17 MAY AGREEMENT.

I KNOW HOW DIFFICULT IT WAS TO GET THAT AGREEMENT, AND WE ALL HAVE CAUSE TO BE GRATEFUL TO GEORGE SHULTZ FOR THE WORK HE PUT INTO IT. YET IT IS NOW CLEARLY AN OBSTACLE TO THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS IN THE LEBANON. I DO NOT SEE HOW PRESIDENT GEMAYEL OR ANY SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT COULD PUT IT INTO EFFECT. AND SYRIA WILL GO ON BEING OBSTRUCTIVE UNTIL IT IS OFFERED A NEW FORMULA. PRECISELY WHAT THAT FORMULA SHOULD BE MUST BE A MATTER FOR THE AMERICAN NEGOTIATORS. BUT PERHAPS THE NOTE TO STRIKE IS THAT, WHILE THE AGREEMENT WILL NOT FORMALLY BE ABROGATED, IT WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED IN ITS PRESENT FORM.

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I FULLY AGREE WITH GEORGE BUSH THAT THIS WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT CONCESSION FOR WHICH A PRICE SHOULD BE EXTRACTED. THE SYRIANS WOULD HAVE TO UNDERTAKE TO ENCOURAGE THEIR CLIENTS TO WORK WITH GENAYEL. THEY WOULD ALSO HAVE TO BE READY TO MEET ISRAEL'S FEARS FOR HER SECURITY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. THE PRECISE DEAL MUST AGAIN BE A MATTER FOR THE NEGOTIATORS. WE KNOW PERFECTLY WELL THAT ANY MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION WILL CAUSE YOU DIFFICULTIES WITH ISRAEL. AND WE ALSO KNOW THAT AMBASSADOR RUMSFELD HAS TOLD THE SYRIANS THAT EVERYTHING CAN BE PUT ON THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. BUT MY FEELING IS THAT, IF PROGRESS IS TO BE MADE, THE TIME HAS COME TO PUT PRECISE PROPOSALS ON THE AGREEMENT TO SYRIA. WE HOPE YOU WILL SEE YOUR WAY TO DOING THIS.

SUTHERLAND

LIMITED

HD/NENAD

PS

PS/MR LUCE

PS/PUS

SIR J LEAHY

MR EGERTON

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

16 February 1984

LEBANON

Thank you for your letter of 15 February with which you enclosed a possible message for the Prime Minister to send to President Reagan.

The Prime Minister considered the text of the message last night but is rather doubtful as to whether it is worth sending the message given recent developments in the Lebanon. She has noted, for example, that Jumblatt has now stated publicly that willingness on the part of President Gemayel to abrogate the 17 May agreement will not be sufficient and that nothing short of Gemayel's resignation will be adequate.

The Prime Minister will consider again before the end of the week whether she wishes to send such a message and I shall be in touch with you again.

A. J. COLES

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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E. P.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

We were delighted to see George and Barbara Bush last weekend. George and I had several good long talks and I now feel much more up to date on your thinking and preoccupations.

We spent a lot of time on the Lebanon and I have been reflecting on that problem since. US involvement in the Lebanon is much greater than ours and I am the last person to indulge in back-seat driving. But I want to be as helpful as I can to your efforts to find a way through the present impasse. The following thoughts may be helpful.

We are agreed that Syria is a key factor. We cannot let President Asad dictate the course of events. But I doubt if he will be prepared to work constructively with us unless he is offered some incentive. Everything I hear leads me to believe that the incentive he needs is a new understanding about the 17 May Agreement.

I know how difficult it was to get that Agreement, and we all have cause to be grateful to George Shultz for the work he put into it. Yet it is now clearly an obstacle to the reconciliation process in the Lebanon. I do not see how President Gemayel or any successor Government could put it into effect. And Syria will go on being obstructive until it is offered a new formula. Precisely what that formula should be must be a matter for the American negotiators. But perhaps the

note to strike is that, while the Agreement will not formally be abrogated, it will not be implemented in its present form.

I fully agree with George Bush that this would be an important concession for which a price should be extracted. The Syrians would have to undertake to encourage their clients to work with Gemayel. They would also have to be ready to meet Israel's fears for her security in Southern Lebanon. The precise deal must again be a matter for the negotiators. I know perfectly well that any move in this direction will cause you difficulties with Israel. And I also know that Ambassador Rumsfeld has told the Syrians that everything can be put on the negotiating table. But my feeling is that, if progress is to be made, the time has come to put precise proposals on the Agreement to Syria. I hope you will see your way to doing this.