

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO MOSCOW

MIDDLE EAST

Points to Make with Gromyko

LEBANON

1. Valued our brief discussion in Stockholm.
2. Still great instability and tension. Urgent need to stop the fighting and reduce the level of violence. Recent events provide the opportunity for a fresh start towards reconciliation and (in parallel) withdrawal of foreign forces. Much must depend on the Lebanese themselves.
3. There is a pressing need for measures which can build confidence. A greater role for the UN would be one positive approach. We expect the UN to play a major role in Arab/Israel dispute: UN help in Lebanon would be an excellent start. How does the Soviet Union see the way forward in the Lebanon?

ARAB/ISRAEL

5. This is not an area of East/West competition, but a regional dispute in which we all have a major interest; (among other things) to prevent it becoming a bone of contention.
6. The situation is stagnant and dangerous. Events in the Occupied Territories are discouraging and the Israeli settlement programme, of which we strongly disapprove, is causing despair among the population which may generate terrorism and other kinds of violence. The future of the PLO is obscure.
7. We agree on objectives: a comprehensive, just peace achieved by negotiation. The international community must play its part. An early international conference is not, however, practical politics at present.

8. In this difficult situation we need to promote small steps to generate confidence. We welcomed Arafat/Mubarak meeting and we sympathise with King Hussein's interest to do something to reassure the population of the West Bank, though it must not be allowed to cause fresh tensions.

9. What chances does the Soviet Union see for progress? Let us stay in touch.

IRAN IRAQ

10. UK neutral; concerned to see an early end to conflict and will support any diplomatic efforts which may help in this. Mediation by the UN Secretary General may eventually offer best hope. What is Soviet view?

11. Recent heightening of tension and attacks on civilian targets by both sides. Iran may be preparing a large scale spring offensive. Immediate aim must be to prevent escalation of conflict. UK urging restraint on both sides. Can Soviet Union exact any influence?



PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO MOSCOW, 13-14 FEBRUARY 1984

MIDDLE EAST

Points to Make with Arabs

LEBANON

1. Common objectives: stable, independent Lebanon with progress over national reconciliation and reform and the withdrawal of foreign forces. We supported the results of Geneva I. Much depends on the Lebanese themselves.
2. Recent events give an opportunity for progress, but great instability and tension persist. First need is to stop the fighting and reduce the level of violence.
3. The May 17 Agreement must not be allowed to become a stumbling block. Alternative arrangements which provide for the real security needs of all concerned should be worked out.
4. We see an important role for the UN in confidence-building. If the UN is to play a role in Arab/Israel, it would be a most useful start if it could contribute to the Lebanese problem. HMG ready to assist.

ARAB ISRAEL

5. Not an East/West dispute but a regional problem, albeit of great importance to Europe (and rest of world).
6. Recent stagnation highly dangerous. Events in the Occupied Territories breeding despair and fresh violence/terrorism. Palestinian and Arab disunity makes it hard to see a way forward.
7. Objectives are agreed: progress towards a comprehensive, just peace by negotiation. [Defensive] But an international conference, though we would not rule one out in principle, is not practical politics at this stage.

8. In these circumstances we favour any practical step that can generate confidence. Following with interest King Hussein's efforts to generate some movement; but these should not complicate matters.

IRAN/IRAQ

9. UK neutral; keen to see an early end to the conflict. Support mediation by UN Secretary General.

10. Concerned at increased threats and recent attacks on civilian targets. Urging restraint.

11. Iran preparing for spring offensive. Must prevent escalation of attacks on economic targets.

12. If conflict spreads, first recourse must be to diplomatic action.

13. Arms Sales [Defensive]

Strictly neutral: have not supplied lethal internsot equipment to either side.

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Essential Facts

LEBANON

The Soviet Union supports the unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, the withdrawal of the MNF and of the sixth fleet. The Russians will have been pleased by the US and UK decisions to redeploy their MNF contingents. The Soviet First Deputy Prime Minister, Aliyev was in Damascus last week, presumably to concert the Soviet and Syrian responses to redeployment. When the Secretary of State discussed with Gromyko in Stockholm on 19 January the possible replacement of the MNF with UN forces he did not rule out a UN role. He said that the key thing was to remove the MNF. The Russians will wish to extract a high price for agreeing to wider UN involvement, including the withdrawal of US naval forces from Lebanon.

A sitrep is attached.

ARAB/ISRAEL

After his evacuation from North Lebanon, Arafat told President Mubarak in December 1983 that he intended to force a polarisation in the PLO; he said he needed time to put his house in order before joining in any new peace initiatives. Nevertheless he stated publicly that he intended to resume his dialogue with King Hussein (broken off in April 1983), and is now expected to go to Amman later this month after the King's return from the US. Arafat also played a prominent role at the Fourth Islamic Summit in January 1984, at which it was decided (with objections from Syria, Libya and South Yemen) to readmit Egypt to the Islamic Conference. Arafat's consolidation of his position in the PLO has, however, proceeded slowly. He had expelled party dissidents from Fatah, and various opponents from the Palestine Military Council. However, he appears to face criticism even within Fatah over the Mubarak meeting, the resumption of the dialogue with Jordan and more generally over his style of leadership. The Palestine National Council, which Arafat had hoped to convene in February to support his position, has now been postponed for this to three months. Reflecting this lull in

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momentum the Arab Summit, which had been scheduled for 31 March in Riyadh, has been postponed indefinitely, apparently because the Saudis were not prepared to host such a summit while differences between the Arabs are so acute.

Soviet Attitudes

The Soviet Union's main objectives are twofold:

- (a) to regain a central role in negotiating a solution of the Arab/Israel dispute, and
- (b) to prevent the US from scoring a diplomatic victory by engineering peace either in Lebanon or in the region.

Moscow remains committed to its proposal for an International Conference on the Middle East and Brezhnev's six-point plan of 15 September 1982 (modelled on the Fez Arab Summit proposals of 9 September, including the demand for a Palestinian state, but has the merit of a more explicit acceptance of the State of Israel). The Conference proposal calls for the PLO to attend on an equal footing with other participants. This makes it a non-starter with Israel and the US. The continuing failure of the US peace efforts in the region will no doubt encourage the Soviet Union and her allies to think (with some justification) that Arab States will increasingly turn to the Soviet Union for a solution. Moscow will have been discomfited by Syria's conflict with Arafat, and its bad relations with Iraq (both also supported by the Soviet Union), but Syria's policies and in particular its determination to spoil any peace moves which do not give Syria, and the Soviet Union, seats at the negotiating table, suit Moscow's book quite well.

IRAN/IRAQ

After a lull, Iraq launched on 11 February a missile attack against the Iranian town of Dezful. Iran has in turn shelled Basra Mandali and Khaniqin in Iraq and has mounted a land attack in Kurdistan. Iran is likely to mount a major offensive further south in the near future.

A dangerous period ahead, particularly if Iraqi reaction to a

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successful Iranian push involves attacks on Iranian oil installations and shipping. Iran's moves unpredictable but threat to close Straits of Hormuz remains. We remain in close touch with Americans and contingency preparations continue (increased readiness of UK mine counter measures forces at Omani request and message of support to Shaikh Zaid, UAE).

The Soviet Attitude

Soviet Union has been major arms supplier to Iraq and may now be concerned at signs of increased US support for Iraq. Soviet relations with Iran are cool as a result of trial of communist (Tudeh) party members but both sides have avoided a complete breakdown.

Arab Attitudes

|| Arabs are concerned about possible defeat of Iraq and spread of Iranian revolution. Several are giving economic and other aid to Iraq. Recent terrorist incidents a particular concern. Stories that UK has been supplying arms to Iran are untrue; we have supplied no lethal equipment to either side.

LEBANON: SITREP 13 FEBRUARY

MILITARY SITUATION

1. Following the major fighting of 3 - 7 February both East and West Beirut are much calmer, although there are still some minor clashes along the 'Green Line' dividing East (Christian) and West (Muslim) Beirut. The Lebanese Army (LAF) have been expelled from almost all parts of West Beirut, where the leader of the Shia Militia Amal, Mr Berri, has emerged as de facto civilian and military commander. The French, whose MNF headquarters is on the Green Line, succeeded in opening a crossing point for a few hours on 12 February. There has been no US shelling of Syrian/Druze positions in the mountains east of Beirut since 10 February; the Americans claim that the shelling has successfully reduced Syrian shelling of East Beirut.

2. Three Katusha rockets were fired from Southern Lebanon into the Israeli border town of Metullah on 9 February. No casualties or damage, but the resumption of rocket attacks despite the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon will have had a considerable psychological effect. On 10 February the Israelis responded with air strikes on alleged Palestinian positions in Bhandoun (east of Beirut). The Israeli Cabinet is actively considering a plan for a further partial Israeli withdrawal, possibly to the Zahrani River south of Sidon.

MNF

3. The Americans have decided that redeployment of US Marines off shore will be completed within 30 days and that US naval firepower will continue to be used as necessary in retaliation for any shelling of Beirut by Syrians/Druze. The French and Italians have said that they will maintain a presence in Beirut until the UN can take over, though the Italians intend to reduce their contingent (1400 men), leaving only enough men to guard the Palestinian refugee camps.

/POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

4. President Gemayel announced on 13 February a new 28 point plan of constitutional and administrative reforms to be discussed at a resumed national reconciliation conference in Geneva. This is unlikely to satisfy Walid Jumblatt (Druze) who has pressed for President Gemayel's resignation, or Berri (Amal), who has suggested that the Lebanese Parliament should pass a constitutional amendment shortening President Gemayel's term of office and calling new Presidential elections in summer 1984. Both are concentrating for the time being on consolidating their hold on West Beirut. They may be prepared to allow Gemayel to stay on if he is prepared to make genuine concessions. The Syrians have not so far endorsed calls for Gemayel's resignation, but are still insisting on abrogation of the 17 May Agreement as a pre-condition of any resumption of the reconciliation process. Two former Lebanese Prime Ministers (Takieddin Solh and Selim Al-Hoss) who might be asked to lead a new government were in Damascus on 9/10 February, together with ex-President Franjieh and another ex-Prime Minister Rashid Karame (both members of the National Salvation Front). The Saudi mediator Hariri is in Beirut. Rumfeld also remains in Beirut, but appears to have no immediate plans to visit Damascus.

5. The priorities remain the restoration of calm in Beirut and re-opening of crossing points between East and West, and US/Syrian agreement on the way forward. The 17 May Agreement remains the major sticking point: the US remain unwilling to abandon it (although they have told us that they would continue to support Gemayel if he felt obliged to do so), appear convinced that heavy shelling of Syrian positions has been helpful in persuading Syria to be flexible, and are opposed to wider UN involvement in the short-term (Gemayel has also rejected the idea of UN-manned crossing points in Beirut). The Israeli Prime Minister has also warned against abrogation of the 17 May Agreement, hinting that this would mean some Israeli forces remaining in South Lebanon indefinitely.