



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Mr Gorbachev's Visit: Lebanon

As you know the situation in Lebanon is deteriorating. General Aoun appears irrevocably committed to confrontation with the Syrians whose response is characteristically severe. The Arab League is making no headway in its efforts to secure a ceasefire. The Foreign Secretary was asked by his interlocutors in the Gulf if the Europeans could help by urging the Syrians to give peace a chance.

M. Dumas telephoned the Foreign Secretary last night, on behalf of President Mitterrand, to ask that the Prime Minister should urge Gorbachev to use his influence with the Syrians. He said that his own approach to Moscow in this sense on 3 April had apparently been well received. He agreed with the Foreign Secretary that our main aim should be support of the Arab League's efforts.

Soviet influence over Syrian policy in Lebanon is likely to be limited. But the Foreign Secretary nevertheless thinks it well worth trying to engage them in efforts to defuse the situation. He will raise this with Mr Shevardnadze and recommends that the Prime Minister should mention our concern to Mr Gorbachev also. The key points are:

- (a) our support for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Lebanon;
- (b) our belief that all non-Lebanese forces should withdraw; and that until they do so they should avoid any action that increases the tension and loss of life (as Syrian shelling is doing now);
- (c) our support for Arab League efforts to settle this (Arab) problem. The Syrians should cooperate.

Yours ever

Bob Peirce

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