

GRS 700

PS TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET.

*Middle East*

UNCLASSIFIED  
FM WASHINGTON 290435Z SEP 82  
TO PRIORITY FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 3180 OF 29 SEPTEMBER



INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK (FOR SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTY)  
ROUTINE OTTAWA CAIRO TEL AVIV, AMMAN BEIRUT JEDDA DAMASCUS  
TUNIS PARIS ROME MOSCOW

INFO SAVING OTHER MIDDLE EAST POSTS

PRESIDENT REAGAN'S PRESS CONFERENCE: THE MIDDLE EAST.

1. DURING HIS NATIONALLY TELEVISED PRESS CONFERENCE ON 28 SEPTEMBER, PRESIDENT REAGAN ANSWERED A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST:

(A) LEBANON. WHEN US TROOPS HAD FIRST GONE INTO BEIRUT THEY HAD DONE SO ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THEIR ONLY TASK WOULD BE TO SUPERVISE PLO WITHDRAWAL. WHEN THAT TASK WAS COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY THEY HAD WITHDRAWN. UNFORESEEABLE EVENTS, INCLUDING THE ASSASSINATION OF GEMAYEL, HAD CHANGED THE PICTURE SUBSEQUENTLY. THE MARINES WHO WOULD BE RETURNING TO BEIRUT WOULD NOT BE ENTERING A VIETNAM SITUATION. THEIR TASK WAS TO SUPPORT THE STABILITY OF LEBANON WHILE THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT REUNITED ITS PEOPLE AND CREATED A SITUATION IN WHICH THE LEBANESE ARMY COULD PRESERVE ORDER. AT THE SAME TIME, THE WITHDRAWAL TO THEIR OWN BORDERS OF ISRAELI AND SYRIAN FORCES SHOULD TAKE PLACE. BOTH COUNTRIES CONCERNED HAD SAID THIS WAS THEIR INTENTION. THE MARINES WOULD COME HOME WHEN THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TOLD THE UNITED STATES THEY FELT THEY WERE IN CHARGE. HE THOUGHT THAT THE MARINE WOULD REMAIN UNTIL ALL FOREIGN FORCES HAD WITHDRAWN BECAUSE THAT WOULD HAPPEN RAPIDLY.

(B) ARAB/ISRAEL. NOTHING THAT HAD HAPPENED IN RECENT WEEKS HAD ALTERED US INTENTIONS. ON ONE SIDE OF THE ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE, TERRITORY WAS THE GOAL, WHILE ON THE OTHER IT WAS SECURITY. WHAT HAD TO BE NEGOTIATED WAS AN EXCHANGE OF TERRITORY FOR SECURITY. THE US WAS DOING ALL IT COULD TO PERSUADE ISRAEL'S ARAB NEIGHBOURS TO NEGOTIATE A PERMANENT PEACE WHICH WOULD MAKE IT UNNECESSARY FOR ISRAEL TO REMAIN AN ARMED CAMP. AT THE SAME TIME, A JUST AND FAIR ANSWER WAS NEEDED TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE PALESTINIANS. THE PRESIDENT DENIED THAT HE HAD ACCUSED ISRAEL OF SABOTAGING THE US INITIATIVE OR OF TURNING FROM A DAVID INTO A GOLIATH IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE HAD OBSERVED THAT ISRAEL, WHICH HAD ALWAYS BEEN A TINY COUNTRY SURROUNDED BY HOSTILE NEIGHBOURS, WAS NOW FEARED BY SOME ARABS AS AN EXPANSIONIST MILITARY POWER. HE LIKENED INITIAL RESPONSES TO HIS INITIATIVE TO THE STAKING OUT OF POSITIONS WHICH WAS FAMILIAR IN TRADE UNION NEGOTIATIONS.

/ (c)



75 TO HQ IN DOWNING STREET.  
(C) RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. AMERICA'S OBLIGATIONS TO ISRAEL  
WERE UNCHANGED. THE SALE OF F16S WAS STILL ON TAP THOUGH IT HAD BEEN  
DECIDED NOT TO SEND FORMAL NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS GIVEN THE  
RECENT CLIMATE. THE ONLY EQUIPMENT IN THE PIPELINE WHICH HAD  
BEEN WITHHELD WAS THE CLUSTER SHELL.

THE PRESIDENT DENIED SUGGESTIONS THAT THE US GOVERNMENT  
WAS TRYING TO UNDERMINE OR OVERTHROW THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT.  
THEY HAD NEVER INTERFERED, AND WOULD NOT DO SO.  
HE EXPECTED TO GO ON DOING BUSINESS WITH MR BEGIN  
ACCORDING TO THE DECISION OF THE ISRAELI PEOPLE, WHO HAD SHOWN  
BY THEIR RESPONSE TO RECENT EVENTS THAT THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN  
THEIR NATIONAL SPIRIT.

FCO PASS SAVING ABU DHABI ADEN ALGIERS BAGHDAD BAHRAIN DOHA  
DUBAI JERUSALEM KHARTOUM KUWAIT MUSCAT RABAT  
SANA-A TRIPOLI

WRIGHT

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

STANDARD

NENAD  
MED  
NAD  
SAD  
UND  
EESD  
ECD  
WED  
RID  
SECURITY D  
MAED  
ES & SD  
ERD  
ESID  
CONS D  
CONS EM UNIT  
CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE

THIS TELEGRAM  
WAS NOT  
ADVANCED