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Middle East

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TO IMMEDIATE F.C.O.

TELEGRAM NUMBER 33 OF 25 JANUARY 1983

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK, TEL AVIV, WASHINGTON, DAMASCUS

ROUTINE CAIRO, JEDDA, CBFC

SAVING UKMIS NEW YORK, PARIS, ROME, TUNIS.

MY TELNO 29 OF 24 JANUARY (NOT TO ALL) LAST SENTENCE:

LEBANON-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS. *mr*

1. DRAPER GAVE ME THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT ON 24 JANUARY.
2. THERE WAS LITTLE GROUND FOR OPTIMISM AT THE MOMENT. HABIB MIGHT BE BACK FROM WASHINGTON AS SOON AS THE END OF THE WEEK, AFTER REPORTING TO PRESIDENT REAGAN. MEANWHILE THEY WOULD GO ON HAMMERING AWAY, BUT THE GAPS BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES WERE SO FAR TOO WIDE FOR THE AMERICANS TO BRIDGE.
3. ON THE ONE HAND, THE LEBANESE SUNNI MUSLIMS, INCLUDING SAEB SALAM (WHO SAID NOTHING OF THIS WHEN I SAW HIM ON 19 JANUARY) AND SHAFIQ WAZZAN WERE HOLDING OUT AGAINST ANY SORT OF "NORMALIZATION". THE SAUDIS AND SYRIANS WERE THREATENING GRAVE ECONOMIC DAMAGE TO THE LEBANON, INCLUDING CLOSURE OF THE SYRIAN-LEBANESE FRONTIER, IF THE LEBANON MADE TOO MANY CONCESSIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, EXTREME MARONITES WERE PRESSING FOR SUBSTANTIAL CONCESSIONS. IN THE MIDDLE WERE PEOPLE LIKE AMIN GEMAYEL WHO WERE HARRIED BY BOTH SIDES. THEY WANT PRACTICAL BUT BARELY VISIBLE CONCESSIONS IN RETURN FOR WITHDRAWAL.
4. DRAPER CONFIRMED THE ACCOUNT OF TWO SETS OF NEGOTIATIONS GIVEN IN PARA 2 OF MY TUR. HABIB WAS LOOKING FOR AN AGREEMENT ON BROAD PRINCIPLES FIRST, WITH NEGOTIATIONS ON DETAILS TO FOLLOW SEMI COLON BUT EVEN THIS IDEA WAS SUBJECT TO THE LIMITS SET OUT IN PARAGRAPH 2 ABOVE. DRAPER ADDED THAT VERY FEW PEOPLE (BUT THEY INCLUDED AMIN GEMAYEL AND ELIE SALEM) KNEW OF THESE SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS.
5. DRAPER HAD NO OBJECTION TO BEING CITED AS THE SOURCE IN CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE AMERICANS. IT WOULD BE WRONG TO TAKE TOO TRAGIC A VIEW AT THIS STAGE. I HAVE SEEN DRAPER IN A STATE OF CIVILIZED, AND HABIB IN A STATE OF EXPLOSIVE, DESPAIR BEFORE. THEY PULL OUT OF IT.
6. FCO PLEASE PASS TO ALL SAVING ADDRESSEES.

ROBERTS

REPEATED AS REQUESTED

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