

MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF) ADVANCE COPIES

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PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR LUCE
PS/FUS
SIR J BULLARD
SIR J LEAHY
MR WRIGHT
MR CARTLEDGE
MR NACINNES
MR ADAMS
MR JENKINS
MR EGERTON

COPIES TO:
MR GOODALL
SIR R ARMSTRONG CABINET OFFICE

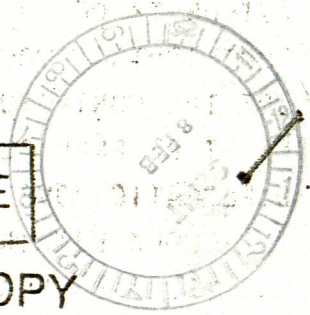
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MS

IMMEDIATE

ADVANCE COPY



SECRET

FROM WASHINGTON 080050Z FEB 84
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 429 OF 7 FEBRUARY
INFO IMMEDIATE TO BEIRUT BRITFORLEB AND PRIORITY TO DAMASCUS
TEL AVIV PARIS ROME CBFC

MY TELEGRAM NUMBER 426

1. I TELEPHONED EAGLEBURGER AT 2330Z THIS EVENING AFTER THE PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT (TEXT IN MY IFT) HAD BEEN ISSUED TO ASK HIM WHERE WE WENT FROM HERE. HE ANSWERED "FRANKLY, I DO NOT KNOW". HE HAD SEEN A COPY OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT BUT DID NOT REACT TO IT. I SAID THAT IT APPEARED AS IF GEMAYEL HAD LOST HIS GOVERNMENT AND THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY HAD DIS-INTEGRATED. HE SAID "SPEAKING PERSONALLY, I AGREE". I HAVE NEVER KNOWN EAGLEBURGER SOUND SO UTTERLY WEARY AND DEJECTED.

2. I SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD NO DOUBT HAVE TO MAKE A STATEMENT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS TOMORROW, AND THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF, BEFORE SHE DID SO, WE COULD HAVE AN INDICATION OF THE WAY THE ADMINISTRATION WAS PROPOSING TO REACT TO THE NEW SITUATION. EAGLEBURGER SAID THAT HE QUITE UNDERSTOOD THAT. THE NEXT STEP WOULD BE A MEETING AT THE WHITE HOUSE LATER THIS EVENING TO HEAR FROM WEINBERGER HIS PLANS FOR THE REDEPLOYMENT OF THE US MARINES TO THEIR SHIPS. HE WOULD LET US KNOW WHEN THERE IS SOMETHING TO SAY.

3. COMMENT. AT THE BEST OF TIMES, THIS TOWN IS NOT NOTED FOR ITS COHERENCE, BUT I HAVE NEVER KNOWN IT IN SUCH DISARRAY AS AT PRESENT. PEOPLE SEEM TO HAVE RUN OUT OF IDEAS AND TO BE AT THE END OF THEIR TETHER. THE PRESIDENT IS IN CALIFORNIA. THE SECRETARY OF STATE IS IN GRENADA. NO DOUBT NORMAL AMERICAN RESILIENCE WILL RE-ASSERT ITSELF BEFORE TOO LONG. BUT IT LOOKS AS IF THE MOST THEY CAN HOPE FOR AT THE MOMENT IS TO WITHDRAW THE MARINES FROM BEIRUT WITH AS FEW CASUALTIES AS POSSIBLE AND TRY TO USE THE FIRE POWER OFF-SHORE TO SEE WHAT CAN BE PUT IN PLACE INSTEAD OF GEMAYEL WITHOUT HANDING TOO COMPLETE A VICTORY TO THE SYRIANS. MEANWHILE IF WE HAVE IDEAS OF OUR OWN ABOUT THE WAY FORWARD NOW IS THE TIME TO FEED THEM IN.

WRIGHT

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