

MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF) ADVANCE COPIES

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FROM WASHINGTON 080052Z FEB 84

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 430 OF 7 FEBRUARY

INFO IMMEDIATE BEIRUT BRITFORLES PRIORITY DAMASCUS TEL AVIV

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MIPT: LEBANON

1. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF PRESIDENT REAGAN'S STATEMENT BEGINS:

THE BLOODSHED WE HAVE WITNESSED IN LEBANON OVER THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS ONLY DEMONSTRATES ONCE AGAIN THE LENGTHS TO WHICH THE FORCES OF VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION ARE PREPARED TO GO TO PREVENT A PEACEFUL RECONCILIATION PROCESS FROM TAKING PLACE. IF A MODERATE GOVERNMENT IS OVERTHROWN BECAUSE IT HAD THE COURAGE TO TURN IN THE DIRECTION OF PEACE. WHAT HOPE CAN THERE BE THAT OTHER MODERATES IN THE REGION WILL RISK COMMITTING THEMSELVES TO A SIMILAR COURSE. YIELDING TO VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM TODAY MAY SEEM TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY RELIEF, BUT SUCH A COURSE IS SURE TO LEAD TO A MORE DANGEROUS AND LESS MANAGEABLE FUTURE CRISIS. EVEN BEFORE THE LATEST OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE. WE HAD BEEN CONSIDERING WAYS OF RECONCENTRATING OUR FORCES AND THE NATURE OF OUR SUPPORT IN ORDER TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE AWAY FROM THE TERRORISTS. FAR FROM DETERRING US FROM THIS COURSE. RECENT EVENTS ONLY CONFIRM THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DECISIVE NEW STEPS I WANT TO OUTLINE FOR YOU NOW. THUS, AFTER CONSULTATION WITH OUR MNF PARTNERS AND PRESIDENT GEMAYEL AND AT HIS REQUEST WE ARE PREPARED TO DO THE FOLLOWING

FIRST TO ENHANCE THE SAFETY OF AMERICAN AND OTHER MNF PERSONNEL IN LEBANON. I HAVE AUTHORIZED U.S. NAVAL FORCES, UNDER THE EXISTING MANDATE OF THE MNF, TO PROVIDE NAVAL GUNFIRE AND AIR SUPPORT AGAINST ANY UNITS FIRING INTO GREATER BEIRUT FROM PARTS OF LEBANON CONTROLLED BY SYRIA. AS WELL AS AGAINST ANY UNITS DIRECTLY ATTACKING AMERICAN OR MNF PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES. THOSE WHO CONDUCT THESE ATTACKS, WILL NO LONGER HAVE SANCTUARY FROM WHICH TO BOMBARD BEIRUT AT WILL. WE WILL STAND FIRM TO DETER THOSE WHO SEEK TO INFLUENCE LEBANON'S FUTURE BY INTIMIDATION.

SECOND. WHEN THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON IS ABLE TO RECONSTITUTE ITSELF INTO A BROADLY BASED REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, WE WILL VIGOROUSLY ACCELERATE THE TRAINING, EQUIPPING AND SUPPORT OF THE LEBANESE ARMED FORCES. ON WHOM THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY RESTS FOR MAINTAINING STABILITY IN LEBANON. WE WILL SPEED UP DELIVERIES OF EQUIPMENT, WE WILL IMPROVE THE FLOW OF INFORMATION TO HELP COUNTER HOSTILE BOMBARDMENTS, AND WE WILL INTENSIFY TRAINING IN COUNTER-TERRORISM TO HELP THE LEBANESE CONFRONT THE TERRORIST THREAT THAT POSES SUCH A DANGER TO LEBANON, TO AMERICANS IN LEBANON, AND INDEED TO PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

THIRD. IN CONJUNCTION WITH THESE STEPS, I HAVE ASKED SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WEINBERGER TO PRESENT TO ME A PLAN FOR REDEPLOYMENT OF THE MARINES FROM BEIRUT AIRPORT TO THEIR SHIPS OFFSHORE. THIS REDEPLOYMENT WILL BEGIN SHORTLY AND WILL PROCEED IN STAGES. U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL WILL REMAIN ON THE GROUND IN LEBANON FOR TRAINING AND EQUIPPING THE LEBANESE ARMY AND PROTECTING OUR REMAINING PERSONNEL. THESE ARE TRADITIONAL FUNCTIONS THAT U.S. PERSONNEL PERFORM IN MANY FRIENDLY COUNTRIES.

OUR NAVAL AND MARINE FORCES OFFSHORE WILL STAND READY, AS BEFORE, TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE PROTECTION OF AMERICAN AND OTHER MNF AREAS AS I HAVE DESCRIBED.

THESE MEASURES, I BELIEVE, WILL STRENGTHEN OUR ABILITY TO DO THE JOB WE SET OUT TO DO AND TO SUSTAIN OUR EFFECT OVER THE LONG TERM. THEY ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPROMISE JOINT RESOLUTION WORKED OUT LAST OCTOBER WITH THE CONGRESS WITH RESPECT TO OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE.

IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF ALL OF US AS AMERICANS TO STICK TOGETHER AND SHOW THE WORLD THAT AMERICA STANDS FIRMLY FOR SOLUTIONS, FOR HONORABLE COMPROMISE, AND FOR TRUE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE STAKES INVOLVED TRANSCEND PARTISANSHIP AND SO MUST OUR POLICY. IF WE FAIL, WE WILL ALL PAY THE PRICE, IF WE SUCCEED ON A BIPARTISAN BASIS. THERE WILL BE ENOUGH CREDIT TO GO AROUND.

ENDS

WRIGHT

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