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CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 222145Z SEP 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO



TELEGRAM NUMBER 3119 OF 22 SEPTEMBER
INFO IMMEDIATE PEKING BEIRUT TEL AVIV UKMIS NEW YORK PARIS ROME
ROUTINE DAMASCUS AMMAN CAIRO JEDDA TUNIS MOSCOW.

MY TELNO 3103 AND UKMIS NEW YORK TELNO 1423 (NOT TO ALL): LEBANON:
PEACE-KEEPING FORCES

1. MS JONES (STATE DEPARTMENT DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR LEBANON) TOLD US TODAY THAT THE AMERICANS HOPED THAT THE BULK OF THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE (MNF), NUMBERING ABOUT 3000 MEN, WOULD BE DEPLOYED IN BEIRUT BY 26 SEPTEMBER. THE ISRAELIS HAD GIVEN NO ASSURANCES ABOUT WITHDRAWAL BUT THE AMERICANS WERE ASSUMING THAT THE IDF WOULD WITHDRAW AS THE MNF ARRIVED. THE MNF WOULD NOT ENTER AREAS OCCUPIED BY ISRAELI FORCES, BUT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THEY SHOULD TAKE CONTROL OF BEIRUT AIRPORT.
2. THE AMERICANS PREFERRED THAT THE MANDATE OF THE FORCE SHOULD NOT BE TOO SPECIFIC. ITS TASKS WERE AS DESCRIBED BY EAGLEBURGER (MY TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE). IT WOULD NOT TAKE OVER POSITIONS DIRECTLY FROM THE ISRAELIS, BUT WOULD ASSIST THE LEBANESE ARMED FORCES TO DO SO. THE AMERICANS DID NOT SUPPORT THE ISRAELI PROPOSAL THAT THEY SHOULD TAKE PART IN A COORDINATING COMMITTEE IN BEIRUT; THE ACTIVITIES OF THE MNF SHOULD BE AGREED BETWEEN THE PARTICIPATING STATES AND THE LEBANESE AND THEN COMMUNICATED TO THE ISRAELIS.
3. THE MNF RULES OF ENGAGEMENT WERE STILL UNDER DISCUSSION. THE TWO OPTIONS WERE THAT IT SHOULD OPEN FIRE ONLY IN SELF-DEFENCE (AS WAS THE RULE FOR THE LAST MNF) OR THAT IT SHOULD TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO PREVENT ARMED MILITIA PASSING THROUGH ITS LINES. MS JONES THOUGHT THAT THE LATTER, WHICH WAS MORE RELEVANT TO THE BEIRUT SITUATION, WOULD BE ADOPTED. THE AMERICANS WERE ASSUMING THAT OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MNF (CUSTOMS, IMMUNITY, ETC) WOULD BE SIMILAR TO THOSE AGREED IN AUGUST.

4. MS JONES SAID THAT THE LENGTH OF THE MNF'S STAY IN BEIRUT HAD NOT BEEN DETERMINED. THIS WOULD BE REVIEWED REGULARLY BY THE CONTRIBUTING STATES AND THE LEBANESE. THE TIMING OF ITS DEPARTURE WOULD DEPEND ON A NUMBER OF FACTORS INCLUDING THE ABILITY OF THE LEBANESE ARMED FORCES TO CONTROL BEIRUT, PROGRESS IN RESTORING CONFIDENCE AND ELIMINATING THE "GREEN LINE" AND IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS ~~AND~~

AND SYRIANS ON WITHDRAWAL OF THEIR FORCES. THE AMERICANS DID NOT MEANWHILE FORESEE A NEED FOR ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MNF.

5. MS JONES STRESSED THAT THE MNF MANDATE WOULD BE LIMITED STRICTLY TO BEIRUT, AND THAT THE AMERICANS HAD NO THOUGHT OF EXTENDING IT IN CONNECTION WITH THE WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI AND SYRIAN FORCES. THERE WOULD NOT BE THE SAME NEED FOR PEACEKEEPING FORCES IN THE BEKA'A OR SOUTHERN LEBANON WHERE LOCAL TENSIONS WERE NOT AS HIGH AS IN BEIRUT, (THOUGH HADDAD COULD BE A PROBLEM). UN OBSERVERS MIGHT PLAY A USEFUL ROLE IN SUPERVISING DISENGAGEMENT AND WITHDRAWAL OF FORCES. THERE WAS LITTLE CHANCE THAT CONGRESS WOULD ACCEPT THE DEPLOYMENT OF AMERICAN TROOPS OUTSIDE BEIRUT.

6. MS JONES CONFIRMED THAT THE AMERICANS FAVOURED THE RENEWAL OF UNIFIL'S MANDATE. THEIR AIM WAS TO GET THE ISRAELIS BACK TO THEIR ORIGINAL OBJECTIVE OF A 40 KILOMETER BUFFER ZONE, WHICH SHOULD BE POLICED BY UNIFIL IN COOPERATION WITH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT FORCES. THERE SHOULD BE NO ISRAELIS OR ARMED HADDAD MILITIA IN THE BUFFER ZONE: (IE THE PRESENT UNIFIL AREA SHOULD BE EXTENDED SOUTHWARDS TO THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER AND NORTHWARDS TO A LINE 40 KILOMETERS FROM METULLA). THE AMERICANS WERE DISAPPOINTED AT NEPAL'S DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM UNIFIL AND AWARE OF THE NEED FOR DISCUSSIONS OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR SYRIAN AND ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND OF UNIFIL'S ROLE TO BE SEEN TO MAKE PROGRESS BEFORE THE DEBATE ON THE RENEWAL OF UNIFIL'S MANDATE. DRAPER WOULD BE PURSUING THIS AS SOON AS THE MNF WAS DEPLOYED AND HABIB WOULD DISCUSS IT IN JERUSALEM AND DAMASCUS LATER THIS WEEK BEFORE REPORTING TO THE PRESIDENT.

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