



PM/82/97

PRIME MINISTER

British Contribution to a Multinational Force in Lebanon

1. The Lebanese Foreign Minister has now made a formal request to me for British participation in an expanded Multinational Force (MNF) in Lebanon. I enclose the text of his message. The Americans, who have already made an informal bid for British participation, have so far heeded hints from us through diplomatic channels that we would rather not be pressed by them formally; but Mr Habib has recently repeated the strong US desire for a British contribution and the US may not hold off for long (see paragraph 6 below).

2. I have publicly acknowledged the Lebanese request and said that the Government will give it careful consideration, while drawing attention to our heavy commitments elsewhere.

3. We have already had a preliminary discussion of possible British participation in Cabinet on 4 November. Your summing up indicated that a formal US request, when it came, should be handled in a way which did not result in the contribution of a British unit to the MNF. I very much agree that we should be careful not to get over-committed or stretch our reserves too thinly. But the Lebanese request is important, and it also raises wider questions about how we should react to requests for British support in other contexts. I therefore think that it is right to set out the arguments more fully than hitherto and that it would be useful for colleagues to discuss the issue before we send a final reply to the Lebanese. I suggest that the following points need to be considered.

AGAINST PARTICIPATION

4. There are of course penalties attached to British participation:

(a) Cost Deployment of even a small unit would be an expensive operation. How expensive would depend on what exactly we were asked to do and for how long. It might be helpful if the Defence Secretary were to supply some illustrative figures. We should have to consider carefully

/how

Can I have a word with PS, with PS,

How does this I.S. I said to-day? No - we said at the last meeting to put this on the agenda of 03? and PS clearly said he was not for it. A.S.G. 17. 11. 82. No / 11. 82.

why?



how to finance any participation since this would not be covered by any existing provision.

(b) An open-ended commitment? The Americans are talking about a 12-month deployment for the Multinational Force by which time they hope that the Lebanese Army will be strong enough to carry out security duties alone. The Lebanese Foreign Minister insists in his message to me that the commitment would not be open-ended and that we would be free to withdraw; but there is always a risk that it would be difficult to do so when we felt we should. It is likely to take more than 12 months to build up the Lebanese Army.

(c) Casualties The Americans and French have already suffered casualties from mines and in one case from a car bomb. Any MNF contingent could expect some casualties, even if only from accidents. The situation is relatively quiet at present, but this may not last.

(d) Involvement in Lebanese affairs Present contributors have already suffered some political embarrassment from the association of their contingents with sensitive operations conducted by the Lebanese forces eg searches for illegal residents, particularly Palestinians.

(e) Mandate and Command Structure As the force is now constituted (three contingents, short term) these are largely lacking. If (but only if) we were to go in, we would need to seek urgently to create an effective structure, in collaboration with other contributors.

IN FAVOUR OF PARTICIPATION

5. A contribution to a Multinational Force in Lebanon would advance British interests in three areas (and refusal would bring corresponding penalties):

Why not? (a) Lebanon It is in our interests that Lebanon should be stable; but the Lebanese need help. We should not leave the work entirely to others. It is clear to me from my recent visits that Britain counts far more in the Middle East than we often think, and the prestige of our armed forces is particularly high. A refusal to participate would disappoint and discourage the Lebanese. Our influence in Lebanon, which will remain a very difficult but also very important focus of



attention in the Middle East, would count for less. At a purely commercial level we are likely to pick up a larger share of reconstruction business and defence sales if we participate in the Multinational Force. The rewards, while difficult to quantify now, could be considerable:

(b) Relations with the Arab World At present our policy is to press the moderate Arabs as well as the Palestinians to seize the opportunities for progress presented by the Reagan proposals. Such arguments carry less weight if we show ourselves unwilling to match our words with actions. In Arab eyes our participation in Sinai is not enough. As / the attached table shows, we are second from the bottom of 21 countries contributing troops to Middle East peace-keeping - only New Zealand does less (the FRG is debarred from sending troops overseas). Whether we like it or not, owing to our historic connections with the Palestinian question, more is expected of us in the Middle East than of others. By not contributing we would undermine our claim to an active role in the Middle East. This role brings us weighty benefits, not least in the field of defence and defence-related equipment sales. (The French have of course a particular connection with Lebanon, but this does not apply to others, eg the Italians).

(c) The US Angle The President and his Administration have pledged themselves to make progress towards a Middle East peace settlement and are now better placed than for many years to do so. We have given them public and diplomatic support: but we must be careful not to get a reputation for offering advice without commitment. There are clear political risks for President Reagan, both international and domestic, if they fail. The Americans see an expanded Multinational Force as having a vital role to play in achieving the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon, and the Lebanese Foreign Minister has stressed this point in a message to me. Failure for lack of support from US allies could derail the Reagan peace initiative. That will be in no one's interests. Moreover our standing in the Arab world depends in part on their belief in our influence over American policy. King Hussein left me in no doubt about the importance of this in his eyes. We shall put this at

*Facts -
please*

*!!!
we shall
be all over
the world!*



Not sent

risk if we refuse to help with an operation which the President regards as crucial.

6. We know that the Americans are planning to expand their MNF contingent and have asked the French and Italians to do the same. The Italians may respond, but the French have told us that they are unlikely to be able to do much more. The Lebanese have also approached Belgium, The Netherlands, Sweden, Austria and South Korea as well as ourselves for a contribution; and the Americans have followed up in each case with a high-level message. Of these, the Belgians have now responded favourably. The Dutch and Swedes have refused (both are already with UNIFIL in South Lebanon, and the latter are debarred by a 1974 law from deploying troops abroad in a non-UN force). We do not know whether South Korea or Austria will be able to respond.

7. We have already firmly told both the Americans and the Lebanese that we are fully stretched around the world, particularly in the Falklands. We can meet some of the points in paragraph 5 by responding in other ways. One possibility, which you and the Defence Secretary are agreeable to in principle, is to offer help in training the Lebanese Army. A substantial contribution to building up Lebanon's armed forces would meet some of the political requirement, and might really help Lebanon in the long term more, but it is not what we are asked for. There will be advantage in getting our offer in very soon, if we are to go down this course.

8. More widely, I feel strongly that our Falklands commitment should not automatically rule out further commitments, particularly where the circumstances affect British interests significantly. As we have discussed in separate correspondence there may for example be a need in due course for a British contribution to the UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia. The ability and will to take part in international cooperative efforts influence our standing in the world, as well as being in our interest in so far as they contribute to international stability. I am strongly of the belief that we should not take too narrow or insular a view of our international role.

They do not visit Lebanon.

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9. I hope that all these points can be considered at an early meeting of OD. We must think carefully about appearing less willing than before to play a part in peacekeeping and similar operations in circumstances where they are generally acknowledged to be in a wider Western interest.
10. I am sending copies of this minute to OD colleagues and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

FP

(FRANCIS PYM)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

16 November, 1982

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Troop Contributions to Peace-Keeping Forces in the Middle East

	UNIFIL	MNF	SINAI/MFO	UNDOF	TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS
UK			37		37
US		1100	1200		2300
France	419	1657*	37		2113
Ireland	722				722
Italy	40	1291	86		1417
Netherlands	810		105		915
Sweden	144				144
Norway	837		4		841
Austria				528	528
Finland				396	396
Poland				131	131
Canada				222	222
Australia			108		108
New Zealand			35		35
Fifi	629		499		1128
Colombia			482		482
Uruguay			75		75



	UNIFIL	MNF	SINAI/MFO	UNDOF	TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS
Ghana	558				558
Nepal	462				462
Nigeria	696				696
Senegal	561				561

* Includes 482 troops transferred temporarily from UNIFIL to MNF

LEBANESE EMBASSY

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Ref: 639/2/KM/JS

12th November 1982

The Rt Hon Francis Pym, MC, DL, MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Pym,

I am writing to ask for your support in participating in the multi-national force, now cooperating with our army in maintaining peace and order in Lebanon.

I have always admired your courageous stand on the fundamental freedoms of mankind. We, in Lebanon, are proud to affirm that we also adhere to these fundamental freedoms and consider them to be inseparable from our national existence.

Now, after eight years of war and destruction, Lebanon has an opportunity to restore its independence and to reclaim the values for which it was proverbial in the Middle East. To achieve, again, these objectives, however, Lebanon needs the support of the great democracies, foremost among which is the United Kingdom. Discussions of the withdrawal of Israeli, Syrian and Palestinian forces from Lebanon have begun. The success of these discussions depends, to a great extent, on the strengthening of the multi-national force now serving in Lebanon.

Your participation in this force is extremely important for us. I am aware, of course, of your widespread commitments throughout the world in the name of freedom and democracy. The United Kingdom may rest assured that your participation would not be an open-ended commitment. Any multi-national force contingent the United Kingdom may provide could be withdrawn at an early stage, if necessary, regardless of progress made in expanding the capabilities and size of the Lebanese armed forces.

The restoration of a free sovereign Lebanon now offers our friends a great opportunity for action in the cause of peace. I am sure you will agree with me that peace in Lebanon will contribute to the peace of the entire Middle East.

Yours sincerely,

Elie A K Salem
Minister of Foreign Affairs

ST. KENNEDY ROAD, BARNACK
LONDON, W. 2

LEAFLET 2000
LONDON, W. 2

02 NOV 1982



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MO 3/7/4

THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY

MS

Prime Minister

You will wish to read this. but following your meeting with Mr. Lynn last Friday I wrote to the F/C-O confirming your earlier decision against participation in the Multinational Force.

A.J.C. ^{29.}/₁₁

Thank you for your minute of 16th November. I am still certain that now is not the time to take on new military commitments. You may be interested to see the breakdown at Annex A of our already substantial out-of-area commitments, which includes a large programme of military assistance to friendly countries throughout the world. Any British participation in an expanded Multinational Force in the Lebanon could only be undertaken at considerable detriment to other high priority tasks, such as BAOR. We have prepared an analysis of the cost and practical consequences of a number of alternative contributions to the Multinational Force. This is attached at Annex B.

2.. There are other practical difficulties. British involvement would almost certainly be difficult to terminate once established: the international community might well condemn a unilateral withdrawal (for whatever reasons) more than a failure to participate in the first place. There is also a danger that if the situation in Lebanon deteriorates again, the Multinational force itself might be left with no alternative to a difficult, dangerous and potentially embarrassing evacuation. Unless we were prepared to abandon all our equipment, this would have to involve an evacuation by sea perhaps from unprotected Lebanese beaches.

3. I am not convinced that the political benefits of British participation in the Multinational Force outweigh the detrimental effect on our overstretched military resources and the risks of such an operation. Moreover, our initial assessment is that although there are opportunities for defence sales these may prove difficult



to bring to fruition. We have been careful to emphasize to our friends in the Arab World that our commitment in the South Atlantic has led to an inevitable reduction in our capability elsewhere, at least for the time being. They will expect Britain to do something to help Lebanon, but an offer of training assistance following the Director of the Military Assistance Office's current visit to Beirut, together with logistic support from Cyprus such as we now provide for UNIFIL, may be seen as more appropriate contributions; particularly - in the first case - in view of our continuing role in Zimbabwe as well as in many countries in the Gulf.

4. As Annex A shows, we are already contributing a great deal, both in the Arab World and elsewhere. I consider that our willingness to help in the Lebanon must reflect our capabilities, seen against our many other important responsibilities.

5. I am sending copies of this minute to the recipients of yours.

Gene Ridley
Private Secretary.

(Draft approved by the Secretary of State and signed in his absence).

Ministry of Defence
26th November 1982

29 NOV 1982



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Page A-1 of A-2 pages

Annex A

UK MILITARY COMMITMENTS (EXCLUDING UK AND NATO/BAOR)

1. SOUTH ATLANTIC:

RN - 1 Nuclear powered attack Submarine,
5 Destroyers or frigates (reducing to 4)
plus 2-3 for roulement,
RFA support

Army - currently 2600-3500 personnel including 1 Infantry battalion
reinforced by one company,
Air Defence battery (RAPIER) plus an
Air Defence troop (BLOWPIPE),
Artillery battery,
2 Engineer Squadrons (plus 5 squadrons as
a short term increment),
Composite Logistic battalion,
Headquarters elements

RAF - 1450 personnel: 8 Phantoms
 6 Harriers
 2 Hercules
 5 Chinooks
 3 Sea Kings
 1 Air Defence Squadron (RAPIER)

2. GIBRALTAR:

RN - 1 Destroyer or frigate

Army - 820 personnel including 1 Infantry battalion and Headquarters
elements

RAF - 368 personnel

3. HONG KONG:

RN - 5 Patrol Boats

Army - 6700 personnel including 5 Infantry battalions (4 Gurkha),
Headquarters elements

RAF - 242 personnel: 8 Wessex

4. CYPRUS (including UNFICYP):

Army - 3300 personnel including 2 Infantry battalions,
2 Armoured Reconnaissance Squadrons,
Headquarters elements

RAF - 1370 personnel: 5 Wessex
 1 RAF Regiment Squadron

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5. BELIZE:

RN - 1 Destroyer or frigate
RFA support

Army - 1400 personnel including 1 Infantry battalion,
Artillery battery,
Armoured Reconnaissance troop,
Headquarters elements

RAF - 500 personnel: 4 Harriers
4 Pumas
1 Air Defence Squadron (RAPIER)

6. SINAI:

Army - 37 personnel as part of HQ MFO

7. BRUNEI:

Army - 980 personnel including 1 Infantry battalion (Gurkha) and
Headquarters elements

8. INDIAN OCEAN (ARMILLA Patrol):

RN - 2 Destroyers or frigates
RFA support
Diego Garcia - 29 man Naval Party

9. NAMIBIA: Proposed contribution 150 Army personnel

10. Major Loan Service Personnel (LSP) deployments as part of
military assistance programmes:

BRUNEI:	<u>142</u>
KUWAIT:	<u>134</u>
NIGERIA:	49
OMAN:	<u>174</u>
SAUDI ARABIA:	64
ZIMBABWE:	92

Total LSP worldwide is almost 800 personnel in 33 countries of
which about 400 are in the Gulf/Middle East.

POSSIBLE UK CONTRIBUTION TO A FUTURE LEBANON MULTINATIONAL FORCE

1. In considering a possible UK contribution to a future Multinational Force in the Lebanon we must look at all our other commitments and assess the effect of a new deployment on our operational capability, on training requirements and on the unaccompanied tour interval (the Army Board optimum interval between unaccompanied tours is 24 months).
2. Outline costs of the following options are at Appendix:
 - a. Armoured Recce Squadron: This could be armed with either Scorpion (a tracked vehicle) from the War Maintenance Reserve (which would be significantly depleted as a consequence), or with Ferrets (a wheeled vehicle no longer on general issue to armoured reconnaissance units but available in sufficient numbers from old stock and an easy vehicle to learn to operate). To meet the requirement we would envisage using UKLF-based armoured recce units. Their other current commitments are UNFICYP and Belize; the tour interval if they deployed to the Lebanon would be about 20 months. Two out of the three UKLF armoured recce units have a Priority 1 role in Europe, and any deployment to Lebanon would be at the expense of training for this role.
 - b. Infantry: With UKLF infantry units now committed to Northern Ireland, Falklands (four months), Belize and UNFICYP there is already considerable overstretch of infantry resources, and the unaccompanied tour interval is currently just below twelve months; this reduces further if major exercises are taken into consideration. Any additional commitment would decrease the number of battalions available to UKLF for both the SPEARHEAD and Emergency Tour rosters and would further increase overstretch. For this reason any infantry contribution for the Lebanon would be drawn from BAOR. However, of the fourteen BAOR-based battalions one is already committed to Northern Ireland, and to take on another task - even for only twelve months - would be at operational penalty to our NATO Assigned Forces (reducing them by one sixth). In addition, a unit deployed to Lebanon might not be able to be extracted and returned to BAOR within the 48 hours of a short-warning scenario. Training in the mechanised infantry role would also be effectively lost for one training season. This would be a serious penalty since mechanised battalions only have three or four training seasons in this role; to reduce even more would be unacceptable. The penalties of deploying an infantry company are similar (it would also have to come from BAOR); the removal of even one company seriously reduces the effectiveness of the parent unit. The deployment of an infantry unit may also create problems, similar to those currently being faced as a result of the Falklands, in the provision of a theatre pool of unit stores for the task.
 - c. Headquarters Unit: We no longer have a surplus of staff officers owing to the rundown in Army manpower. HQ units are now deployed with six out-of-area garrisons and the Sinai MFO (See Annex A), and major HQs in the UK and BAOR are already

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understaffed as a result of our new commitments in the Falklands and Sinai. The creation of an additional HQ could only be undertaken by withdrawing individuals from these already depleted HQs or from operational units, with further consequential detriment. Experience has also shown that ad hoc units, similar to our Sinai contribution, are unsatisfactory in that they lack the cohesion of a formed unit, with all the associated penalties of lower morale, extra administrative requirements and disciplinary problems. The provision of such a unit for Lebanon would therefore be inadvisable.

OUTLINE ANNUAL COSTS OF AD CONTRIBUTION TO LEBANON MULTINATIONAL FORCE

Ser	Element	Approx Size	Capitation Cost (£M) (1)	Running Costs (£M) (2) (3)	Interest on Eqpt Cap-ital Outlay (£M)	Roulement Cost (£M) (4)	Total Cost (£M) (5)
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
1	Infantry Battalion	650	9.14	1.2	.04	1.16	11.54
2	Infantry Company	150	2.18	.4	.01	.29	2.88
3	Armoured Recce Sqn (Ferrets)	140	1.97	.15	.004	.29	2.42
4	Armoured Recce Sqn (SCORPION)	140	1.97	.46	.04	.29	2.76
5	HQ Unit	40	.56	.1	.01	.14	.81

Notes

1. All costings at 1982/83 prices.
2. No inclusion is made for cost of base overhaul of equipment before deployment; in the case of Ferret this could be as high as £1.2M.
3. No inclusion is made for increasing base overhaul of major assemblies or preparation of spares package; in the case of Ferret this could cost up to £1.25M.
4. Roulement costs are based on the use of the RAF transport fleet, the contingent changing over biannually.
5. Does not include costs of spares packages or any costs for deployment - in the case of an Armoured Recce Squadron, if by air, £1.2M. Sea movement costs would be considerably cheaper.

cc MASTER
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LEBANON

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

26 November 1982

BRITISH CONTRIBUTION TO THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON

When the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary called on the Prime Minister today for a general discussion about various foreign policy issues, reference was made to Mr. Pym's minute of 16 November about the British contribution to a multinational force in the Lebanon.

The Prime Minister confirmed her earlier view that there should be no British participation in the force.

Mr. Pym informed the Prime Minister that, in consultation with the Secretary of State for Defence, he would be putting forward a proposal for the provision of training facilities for the Lebanese forces.

The Prime Minister does not think it necessary for this and the other issues referred to in Mr. Pym's minute of 16 November to be discussed in OD at present.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the members of OD and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A. J. COLES

J.E. Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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cc MASTER

PRIME MINISTER

Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary

Mr. Pym is calling tomorrow at 9.30. His office say that he wants to discuss the following subjects:-

a) Lebanon: Multinational force

You minuted on the attached minute that you wanted to have a word with him about it.

b) Relations with France

See your minute at Flag A - I thought you might like to discuss with the Foreign Secretary how we should handle this.

c) East/West Relations

There is no new point here. But Mr. Pym may suggest that we find time for a small meeting, perhaps ^{during} ~~through~~ the recess, to have a more thorough discussion of East/West relations than is normally possible. In particular he thinks it will be useful to consider how we can best work to ensure that NATO's double track decision is not damaged next year by some of the smaller European countries.

d) Gibraltar

U He may want to have a word about how to handle the new Spanish Government on this issue.

e) Zimbabwe

He will be submitting to you in due course a paper on our general policy about aid to Zimbabwe - but a preliminary word might be helpful.

f) Overseas Students

I believe that Mr. Pym thinks we should try to find a little money to help with students from particular countries such as Hong Kong and Malaysia.

A.J.C.