

*cc Sir A Parsons*

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

19 July 1983

*Dear John*UK Contribution to the Multinational Force (MNF)

Richard Mottram informed me by telephone this morning that in view of the Ministry of Defence's strong preference to use UK-based troops for the extension of our contribution to the Multinational Force, Mr Heseltine had agreed with Sir Geoffrey Howe's suggestion (my letter of 18 July) that the Ministry of Defence would meet the full additional cost of £370,000 which would otherwise fall to the FCO budget. The way is now clear therefore for us to inform the Lebanese Government of the extension of our deployment and to make a public announcement.

In his letter of <sup>Adj</sup> 5 July to John Coles, John Holmes said that Sir Geoffrey Howe believed that we should not carry conviction if we were to say publicly yet again that our contribution is limited to a further 3 months. He therefore proposed that we should inform the Lebanese and other parties concerned that we shall keep our continued participation under close review, and that we have no intention of being drawn into a lengthy commitment. We would, nevertheless, for our own purpose reconsider the position after 3 months.

It would be appropriate to announce the extension of our contribution in the House during oral Questions to the FCO tomorrow. Mr Robert Brown MP has put down a question to ask the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary 'whether he has had discussions with the Lebanese Government concerning the future deployment of the British contingent to the Multinational Force in Lebanon'. Sir Geoffrey Howe proposes that the reply (which would be given by Mr Luce) should be as follows:

'We are informing the Lebanese Government that we are willing to extend our deployment for a limited period beyond 7 August. We shall

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continue to keep in close touch with the Lebanese government and the other contributors to the Multinational Force, and the deployment of the British contingent will be kept under review.'

Sir Geoffrey Howe would be grateful to know before mid-day tomorrow (Wednesday) whether the Prime Minister, Mr Heseltine and the Chief Secretary are content with what he proposes. If so, we would at the same time inform the Lebanese government and the other troop contributors of our decision. We would also tell the United Nations Secretariat and the Cyprus Government that we intend after 7 August to use UK-based troops, and thus to restore our UNFICYP contingent to its full strength.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Terry Matthews (Treasury).

*Yours ever,*

(B J P Fall)  
Private Secretary

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