

4A

SECRET

GR 400
SECRET
DESKBY 120700Z
FM WASHINGTON 120143Z
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 2553 OF 11 SEPTEMBER 1983

LEBANON/MNF: TELECONS WRIGHT/EGERTON

1. EAGLEBURGER HAS JUST RUNG TO TELL ME THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD DECIDED THIS MORNING THAT THE OCCUPATION OF THE DOMINANT TERRAIN IN THE VICINITY OF THE SUQ AL GHARB BY HOSTILE FORCES WOULD ENDANGER THE POSITIONS OF THE U.S. MARINES. THEREFORE A SUCCESSFUL DEFENCE OF THE AREA BY THE LAF IS VITAL TO THE SAFETY OF U.S. PRESENCE.

2. THEREFORE, IF AND WHEN THE U.S. ZONE COMMANDER CONSIDERES THAT THE SUQ AL GHARB IS IN DANGER OF FALLING AS A RESULT OF ATTACKS INVOLVING NON-LEBANESE FORCES, AND IF REQUESTED BY THE HOST GOVERNMENT, THE U.S. WILL OFFER ASSISTANCE TO THE LAF IN DEFENCE OF THE SUQ AL GHARB. SUCH ASSISTANCE MAY INCLUDE NAVAL SURFACE SUPPORT AND, IF DEEMED NECESSARY, TACTICAL AIR STRIKES. IT WILL NOT (R) NOT INVOLVE GROUND FORCES.

3. SO MUCH FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL DECISION. EAGLEBURGER WENT ON TO SAY THAT, ACCORDING TO THEIR CURRENT INTELLIGENCE, SUQ AL GHARB WAS NOT UNDER IMMEDIATE THREAT. HE EMPHASSED THAT YOUR CONCERNS, WHICH I HAD TRANSMITTED TO HIM EARLIER IN THE EVENING, HAD HAD A MARKED EFFECT ON THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION, PARTICULARLY IN SETTING STRICT LIMITS TO U.S. CURRENT OBJECTIVES. HE ADDED THAT THE DECISION WOULD NOT BE PUBLICISED AND WAS BEING HELD VERY CLOSELY WITHIN THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION AND HOPED THAT WE WOULD DO THE SAME. THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD, IN THE COURSE OF THE NEXT FEW DAYS, HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CONGRESS, SO LEAKS MIGHT OCCUR, BUT EVEN WITH THE CONGRESS THEY WOULD AVOID THE LEAKAGE OF THE DECISION TO THE LAF.

SECRET

14.

SECRET

4. EAGLEBURGER REPEATED THE REQUEST ALREADY RECEIVED THAT INVINCIBLE AND HER ACCOMPANYING TASK FORCE NOW ENTERING THE MEDITERRANEAN EN ROUTE FOR THE INDIAN OCEAN, SHOULD SPEND SOME TIME IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN. HE ADDED THAT THE U.S. BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY, NOW OFF THE NICARAGUAN PACIFIC COAST, WOULD TRANSIT THE PANAMA CANAL EN ROUTE FOR THE ATLANTIC. SHE HAD NO ORDERS TO ENTER THE MEDITERRANEAN BUT WOULD BE AVAILABLE IF NECESSARY.

FCO PLEASE REPEAT AS NECESSARY.

WRIGHT

MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)
LIMITED.

NENAD
MED
DEFENCE D
PUSD
NEWS D
UND
NAD
WED
FINANCE D
SED

PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR LUCE
PS/PUS
SIR J BULLARD
SIR J LEAHY
MR WRIGHT
MR CARTLEDGE
MR EGERTON
MR STREETON

COPIES TO

SIR A PARSONS NO 10 DOWNING ST
MOD DS11

²
SECRET