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FM WASHINGTON 260001Z

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 3132 OF 25 OCTOBER 1983

INFO IMMEDIATE PARIS, ROME, UKMIS NEW YORK, BEIRUT, TEL AVIV,
DAMASCUS, MODUK.

LEBANON

1. MURPHY TOLD MR LUCE TODAY THAT SHULTZ'S OBJECTIVES AT THE MEETING OF MNF FOREIGN MINISTERS ON 27 OCTOBER WOULD BE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE MNF WAS NOT GOING TO CUT AND RUN AND TO CONSIDER WHAT MORE COULD BE DONE TO ENCOURAGE THE LEBANESE FACTIONS TO WORK URGENTLY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION.
2. THE AMERICANS HAVE NO CLEAR VIEW OF HOW THIS SHOULD BE DONE BUT ARE WILLING TO CONSIDER ANY NEW IDEAS. THEY HAVE IMPRESSED ON THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT THAT THE ATTACKS ON THE MNF ON 23 OCTOBER MAKE EARLY PROGRESS TOWARDS NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IMPERATIVE AND THAT THE US FORCES ARE IN LEBANON TO SUPPORT GEMAYEL AS THE LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT NOT (NOT) MARONITE SUPREMACY OR THE PHALANGE. THERE ARE NO US BLANK CHEQUES.
3. MURPHY SAID THAT SHULTZ MIGHT BE ABLE TO TELL HIS COLLEAGUES ON 27 OCTOBER ABOUT THE APPOINTMENT OF A MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATOR TO SUCCEED MCFARLANE. IT HAD NOT YET BEEN DECIDED WHETHER HIS BRIEF SHOULD BE THE MIDDLE EAST, LIKE HABIB'S AND MCFARLANE'S, OR CONFINED TO LEBANON. FAIRBANKS WOULD IN ANY CASE BE IN GENEVA FOR THE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION TALKS ON 31 OCTOBER. THERE WAS NO (NO) MENTION OF A EUROPEAN NEGOTIATOR FROM AN MNF CONTRIBUTOR GOVERNMENT.
4. MURPHY DISMISSED MR LUCE'S SUGGESTION THAT THE LEBANON/ISRAEL AGREEMENT WAS DEAD. IT WAS FROZEN AND SHOULD BE ABANDONED ONLY FOR A HIGH PRICE. THERE WAS NO OTHER GUARANTEE OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. IT WAS A FANTASY TO SUPPOSE THAT THE US WOULD LEAN ON THE ISRAELIS TO WITHDRAW OTHERWISE. BUT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO HANDLE THE DEMAND OF THE SYRIANS AND THEIR ALLIES THAT THE AGREEMENT SHOULD BE SCRAPPED. THE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION TALKS COULD WELL BREAK DOWN AT THE OUTSET OVER THIS ISSUE.
5. MURPHY THOUGHT THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE SEARCHING FOR A ROLE IN LEBANON. THEY WERE WORRIED BY THE ARAB, ESPECIALLY SYRIAN, PERCEPTION OF ISRAELI WEAKNESS. THEY DID NOT REJECT IDEAS FOR EXTENDING A LEBANESE GOVERNMENT CIVILIAN PRESENCE IN THE SOUTH BUT WERE EMPHATIC THAT THEIRS COULD BE THE ONLY ARMY. THEY HAD NO CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO PROMOTE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION: THEIR RESPONSE WAS THAT THE LEBANESE SHOULD TALK TO THEM.

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6. MURPHY SAID THAT THE AMERICANS SHARED OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE DELAY IN GETTING OBSERVERS IN PLACE TO OBSERVE THE CEASEFIRE. THE LEBANESE AND THE SECURITY COMMITTEE WERE DRAGGING THEIR FEET. THE GREEKS WERE WAVERING AND UNABLE TO PROVIDE AS MANY AS THE 400 OBSERVERS FOR WHICH THEY HAD BEEN ASKED. HE HOPED TO HEAR MORE ABOUT THE ITALIAN POSITION FROM ANDREOTTI ON 27 OCTOBER.

7. MURPHY THOUGHT THAT IRANIAN-BACKED SHIA GROUPS WERE PROBABLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ATTACK ON THE MARINES, THOUGH THE EVIDENCE WAS NOT CONCLUSIVE. THE ADMINISTRATION WERE DETERMINED TO RESPOND ONCE RESPONSIBILITY WAS ESTABLISHED. BUT THEIR ACTION WOULD NOT BE HALF-BAKED OR UNWARRANTED. MR LUCE HOPED THAT DESPITE THEIR UNDERSTANDABLE ANGER AND FRUSTRATION THE US WOULD NOT REACT IN THE GULF: THAT COULD HAVE VERY SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS. THAT THE PROBLEM WAS UNDER CLOSE STUDY. IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS HOW MUCH IMPACT US ASSISTANCE TO IRAQ WOULD HAVE ON DAMASCUS OVER LEBANON. THE US WERE WELL AWARE OF THE DANGERS IN THE GULF AND WOULD MAKE NO MAJOR CHANGE IN POLICY THERE JUST TO TRY TO INFLUENCE THE SYRIANS. THE LATTER WERE HOWEVER NERVOUS: US/IRAQ RELATIONS COULD PROVE TO BE AN INTERESTING PRESSURE-POINT.

8. DAM MENTIONED SEPARATELY THAT SHULTZ WOULD WANT TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY OF YOUR MEETING ON 27 OCTOBER TO DISCUSS IRAN/IRAQ.

WRIGHT

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MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)

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MED
DEFENCE DEPT
PUSD
NEWS DEPT
UND
NAD
WED
SED
ECD(E)
FINANCE DEPT
PROTOCOL DEPT
PS

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