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GR 150

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FM BEIRUT 130745Z DEC 83

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 715 OF 13 DECEMBER 1983

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK, PARIS, ROME AND WASHINGTON

Read in full

mf

MY TELNO 709: MNF

1. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR BRIEFED THE AMBASSADOR LAST NIGHT (12 DECEMBER) ON GUTMAN'S CALL ON PRESIDENT GEMAYEL.
2. GUTMAN HAD SET THE SCENE WITH AN EXPANSIVE INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FRANCE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE MNF AND FRANCE'S COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE OF LEBANON, COUPLED WITH AN EXPOSE OF FRENCH ANXIETIES ABOUT CASUALTIES. THE PRESIDENT HAD SAID THAT HE KNEW REDEPLOYMENT AND REDUCTIONS WERE THE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION IN THE MNF COUNTRIES. NOW WAS THE WORST POSSIBLE TIME TO DO ANYTHING OF THIS KIND. IT WOULD BE MISREAD AS A SIGNAL OF LESSENERD SUPPORT FOR LEBANON AND ADD TO THE BURDEN OF THE LEBANESE ARMED FORCES. HE HOPED THE FRENCH WOULD REFLECT WITH QUOTE GREAT PRUDENCE AND CARE UNQUOTE BEFORE TAKING ANY SUCH DECISIONS.
3. AFTER SOME INCONCLUSIVE DISCUSSION IT WAS AGREED TO LEAVE THE MATTER OVER QUOTE UNTIL NEXT YEAR UNQUOTE (IE FOR ANYTHING BETWEEN 2 WEEKS AND 12 MONTHS).

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MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON (MNF)

LIMITED
NENAD
MED
DEFENCE DEPT
FUSD
NEWS DEPT
UND
NAD
WED
SED
ECD(E)
FINANCE DEPT
PROTOCOL DEPT
PS

PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR LUCE
PS/FUS
SIR J BULLARD
SIR J LEAHY
MR WRIGHT
MR CARTLEDGE
MR MACINNES
MR ADAMS
MR EGERTON
MR JENKINS

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SECRET

GR 360

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FM BEIRUT 121000Z DEC 83

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 711 OF 12 DECEMBER 1983

INFO ROUTINE MODUK, ROME, PARIS, WASHINGTON

MS

MY TELNO 709: **LEBANON/MNF**

1. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR TOLD ME YESTERDAY THAT GUTMAN IS SEEING THE PRESIDENT ONLY AT MIDDAY TODAY 12 NOVEMBER ON A FLYING VISIT.
2. SPEAKING IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE HE SAID THAT HE DOUBTED WHETHER GEMAYEL WOULD AGREE TO MAKE THE QUOTE SUGGESTION UNQUOTE ENVISAGED. HE WOULD FEEL BADLY LET DOWN. THE ARMED FORCES WERE IN NO WAY YET STRONG ENOUGH TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR ORDER IN BEIRUT, NOR TO TACKLE THE SOUTHERN SUBURBS OR EVEN SEAL THEM OFF. THE FRENCH CONTINGENT'S TASK COULD NOT REALISTICALLY BE DESCRIBED AS ACHIEVED (WHAT EVER THE TERMS OF THE ORIGINAL EXCHANGE OF LETTERS, UKDEL NATO TEL NO 344, PARA 6).
3. HE COMMENTED ON THE WITHDRAWAL TO THEIR SHIPS OF 350 US MARINES AND ANDREOTTI'S STATEMENT IN BRUSSELS THAT ITALY'S CONTINGENT MIGHT BE REDUCED TO ITS ORIGINAL NUMBER OF 1100: IE CUT BY HALF. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE ITALIAN PLAN WAS TO REDUCE BY SMALL UNANNOUNCED STAGES. HE SAID THAT IF THE MNF TIPTOED OUT NOW HE FEARED THAT SERIOUS DISORDER AND BLOODSHED IN BEIRUT WOULD FOLLOW WITHIN MONTHS IF NOT SOONER.
4. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR EQUALLY THINKS VERY LITTLE OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT'S PROJECTED SECURITY PLAN (DAMASCUS TELNO 403) UNDER WHICH THE GOVERNMENT, KATAEB, PSP AND AMAL WOULD AGREE NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR RESTORING ORDER, WITH THE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE (ISF) AND NOT THE ARMY BEING INTRODUCED BY JOINT ACCORD INTO SENSITIVE AREAS IN THE SHOUF AND SOUTHERN SUBURBS.

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5. THIS IS ALL VERY PESSIMISTIC. BUT I FEAR THAT SOME OF WHAT HE SAYS MAY BE RIGHT. YOU WILL WANT TO GO OVER THE GROUND CAREFULLY WITH GEMAYEL DURING HIS VISIT. IF IN THE MEANTIME WE HAVE TO COMMENT IN PUBLIC ON THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR OWN CONTINGENT OF OUR PARTNERS' TROOP WITHDRAWALS, WE COULD PERHAPS DEFLECT PRESSURE BY POINTING OUT (A) THAT OUR NUMBERS ARE ALREADY MUCH LOWER THAN OUR PARTNERS', (B) OUR CONTINGENT IS OCCUPIED ON THE CRUCIALLY USEFUL TASK OF GUARDING THE CEASEFIRE COMMITTEE AND (C) IT WOULD OF COURSE BE APPROPRIATE TO REVIEW OUR NUMBERS AND THEIR DEPLOYMENT IF AND WHEN THAT TASK ENDED.

MIERS

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