

MNF

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FM ROME  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELNO 695  
OF 201715Z DECEMBER 1983

UKREP BRUSSELS TELNO 4543: LEBANON

1. I WAS INTERESTED TO READ THIS ACCOUNT OF WHAT CHEYSSON HAD SAID ABOUT THE NEED TO APPROACH THE RUSSIANS ABOUT A UN PRESENCE IN BEIRUT. I HAVE NOT SPOKEN TO THE ITALIANS ABOUT THIS, BUT I HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT ANDREOTTI WOULD FIND AN APPROACH TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE PASSAGE OF A NEW UN SECURITY RESOLUTION THE RATIONAL WAY OF DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM. THE ITALIANS FEEL INCREASINGLY EXPOSED IN LEBANON, AND AS YOU WILL HAVE SEEN HAVE NOW DECIDED TO REDUCE SUBSTANTIALLY THE NUMBER OF THEIR TROOPS. THERE IS A GENERAL FEELING THAT HAD THE IRANIAN TERRORISTS ATTACKED THE ITALIANS RATHER THAN THE FRENCH AND AMERICANS, THE ITALIAN CONTINGENT WOULD HAVE LEFT BY NOW. YET ITALY, LIKE THE OTHER MNF PARTNERS, IS RELUCTANT TO WITHDRAW IN THE FACE OF EXISTING U S OPPOSITION. A DIPLOMATIC APPROACH TO THE RUSSIANS MIGHT BE THE OBVIOUS ROUTE TO ANDREOTTI, AND WOULD ALSO BE WELCOME TO SPADOLINI, WHO HAS FOR SOME TIME WANTED TO SEE MORE UN INVOLVEMENT.
2. THE MOST DIFFICULT ASPECT FOR ITALY, AS I PRESUME FOR OURSELVES, IS WHETHER WE TRY TO PERSUADE THE U S GOVERNMENT TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH AN ENQUIRY IN MOSCOW. IF I AM RIGHT IN BELIEVING THAT THE U S WOULD INSTINCTIVELY OPPOSE ANY MOVE WHICH INCREASED THE ROLE OF THE USSR IN THE MIDDLE EAST, IT MIGHT BE OPEN TO BRITAIN AND ITALY TO GIVE SOME DISCREET ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE FRENCH TO CONTINUE THEIR EXISTING CONTACTS WITH THE RUSSIANS.
3. TO ILLUSTRATE THE KIND OF APPROACH WHICH MIGHT BE MADE, WE COULD CONSIDER SOMETHING ON THE FOLLOWING LINES. THE THREE EUROPEAN PARTICIPANTS IN THE MNF HAD (THE FRENCH WERE SURE) NO DESIRE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN FIGHTING, IN SENDING THEIR CONTINGENTS TO THE LEBANON. THEIR MOTIVES HAD BEEN SOLELY TO ENCOURAGE THE PROCESS OF INTERNAL PACIFICATION, WHICH THEY HOPED WAS POSSIBLE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES A YEAR AGO. THESE HOPES HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED. BUT TO WITHDRAW THESE FORCES NOW WOULD SOLVE NOTHING, AND MIGHT INDEED AGGRAVATE THE SITUATION, BY CAUSING SYRIAN FORCES AND THOSE UNDER HER CONTROL TO STRENGTHEN THEIR HOLD ON CENTRAL AND NORTHERN LEBANON.

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WERE THAT TO HAPPEN, THERE WOULD BE A REAL RISK OF ISRAELI INTERVENTION AGAINST SUCH FORCES: AND EVEN IF CONFINED TO LEBANESE TERRITORY, THE BLOODSHED AND DAMAGE WOULD CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR USSR, IN ITS ROLE AS A TREATY PARTNER OF SYRIA, AS WELL AS FOR EVERYBODY ELSE. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THE PASSAGE OF A NEW SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION WOULD BE THE BEST WAY OF KEEPING THE COMBATANTS APART AND ENCOURAGING RECONCILIATION.

4. I HOPE YOU WILL FORGIVE ME FOR MAKING THIS SUGGESTION, IN AN AREA OF NO DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY OF MINE. BUT I PUT FORWARD THE IDEA IN CASE YOU WOULD LIKE ME TO SPEAK VERY INFORMALLY TO A SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL. I COULD DO THAT BUT WOULD HAVE TO GO BEFORE THE END OF THIS WEEK, BEFORE ITALIAN OFFICIALS CLOSE DOWN FOR THE HOLIDAY.

BRIDGES

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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  
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