

Confidential Filing

Visits of Donald Rumsfeld,
Special Middle East Envoy

USA

January 1984

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

20 January 1984

See Peter,

CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER BY MR. RUMSFELD

I enclose a record of the conversation which took place here today between the Prime Minister and Mr. Donald Rumsfeld.

I am sending a copy of this letter and its enclosure to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

for ever

John Colman.

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

SUBJECT: MASTER

RECORD OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND
MR. DONALD RUMSFELD ON FRIDAY 20 JANUARY AT 1730 HOURS AT NO. 10

Present

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|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Prime Minister | Mr. Rumsfeld |
| Foreign & Commonwealth Secretary | U.S. Ambassador |
| Mr. Coles | Mr. Rodman |

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Mr. Rumsfeld first referred to the general situation in the Arab world. He was very pleased about the decision of the Islamic Conference to readmit Egypt. He understood that Syria, Libya and Iran had opposed this move, but that Guinea and Pakistan had been particularly helpful. Jordan would be very encouraged by this event. The Prime Minister said that all the non-radical Arab world would welcome it.

Mr. Rumsfeld said that he believed that the effects of King Hussein's decision to recall the Jordanian Parliament had been generally favourable. The reactions in the West Bank and in Jordan itself had been good. Israeli comment, apart from a statement by Mr. Shamir yesterday, had been generally positive. Syrian hostility towards Jordan had of course been increased.

The Prime Minister said that Mr. Shultz had told her that the United States had helpfully put pressure on Israel to facilitate the recall of the Jordanian Parliament. Criticisms of the United States for never putting pressure on Israel were not always fair. Mr. Rumsfeld said that the action which the United States had taken with Israel was not generally known. It was a sensitive matter and he hoped we would not divulge it.

It was clear from the discussions with King Hussein that the latter wanted at root a guarantee of some kind. His circumstances were such that private assurances of support were not enough. A

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behaviour pattern based on private assurances was seen as irrational because his people had no knowledge of the nature of the assurances. The United States, like the United Kingdom, believed that it was very important to strengthen and support King Hussein. He had told Mr. Luce earlier that he hoped we were reviewing ways of achieving this. Perhaps some joint effort would be possible. Syria was increasing its pressure upon the King and using both the threat and example of assassination of prominent Jordanians. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary recalled that one of the main points made by the Prime Minister to President Reagan during her September visit to Washington had been the necessity of supporting Hussein.

The Prime Minister stated that she hoped that the US was using its influence upon Israel to prevent further talk about Jordan being Palestine. This line was not true; nor was it helpful. All our efforts to stop Israeli settlements in the West Bank had failed. Moreover, the conditions of life of Arabs in the West Bank were not good and we ought to give them more aid. If it were the case that Israel was now taking a more helpful line towards Jordan, Hussein's position would be eased. But she was not encouraged by Mr. Shamir's background. Mr. Rumsfeld said that he considered Shamir to be more pragmatic than Begin. The Prime Minister replied that Shamir might not be so fanatical but there was probably little basic difference between the two.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that Arafat appeared to have cut loose from that part of the PLO dominated by Syria. Our impression was that he commanded respect on the West Bank. It would be helpful if Hussein, with the help of President Mubarak, could create a representative movement under Arafat. The Prime Minister said that Israelis were worried by Mubarak's reception of Arafat. They had hoped that he would become the representative of simply the West Bank Palestinians, rather than the PLO. Mr. Rumsfeld said that he believed that King Hussein was focussing on creating a mechanism which could deliver some solution for the Palestinian people. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that the diplomatic skill

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and leadership of Egypt, if it were now to be incorporated in the Arab fold, would be great assets.

Reverting to the position of Mr. Shamir, Mr. Rumsfeld observed that he presided over a very fragile coalition. He was, sensibly, talking to Mr. Peres about adjustments in the Government. Given his fragile political and economic situation, and the pressure upon him of some of the coalition partners, he had not done a bad job. He might turn out to be pragmatic on the Arab-Israel issue. The Prime Minister commented that Shamir's coalition partners would not be helpful over the West Bank. Was Shamir doing anything to stop settlements?

Mr. Rumsfeld said that he would not rule this out if King Hussein joined the negotiating process. But ^{Shamir} / would not negotiate with Arafat. Israeli memories of PLO terrorism were altogether too fresh. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that the Middle East kaleidoscope was changing. Hussein would clearly be playing a leading role. The opposition in Israel wished to discontinue settlements on the West Bank. So there was a certain amount of fluidity. Mr. Rumsfeld said that he would not rule out a fresh look at the Arab-Israel issue by Shamir. But he wondered whether King Hussein really wanted the West Bank to be re-incorporated in Jordan.

The Prime Minister then turned the conversation to the Lebanon. Mr. Rumsfeld said that there were many negative factors. The economy was getting worse. The currency was weakening. Taxes could not be collected. The infiltration into southern Beirut was continuing and had probably accelerated in the last two months. There was an uninterrupted passage of weapons and men (including Iranians, Syrians and Libyans) through the Shuweifat Gap. This was creating a dangerous situation which could explode at any time. The Lebanese Government was very concerned. The Prime Minister pointed out that the area referred to was very close to the position of the British contingent in the MNF. Was the area in question run by the Amal? Mr. Rumsfeld said that he was not sure. He had talked to Nabi Berri four days ago. Berri's organisation was relatively small and undisciplined. He probably

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could not control the area. Moreover, Berri was constantly worried that the radicals would turn their attention to him. He had hastened to assure the US Ambassador in Beirut that his organisation had not been responsible for the assassination of the President of the American University.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the British contingent was the only contingent engaged in patrolling. We were not hidden behind sandbags. She was concerned that if any action were taken in the area described, the British contingent would become a target. Mr. Rumsfeld said that he believed that terrorism would get worse in the Lebanon this year. The Syrians were stalling and were using the time to infiltrate Beirut with their own protégés. The biggest problem was the clear Syrian impression that the MNF would have to leave within the next two months. The Prime Minister stated that if the present situation continued, the Syrians would be proved wrong. But her fear was that there would be another major incident involving the MNF and that this would lead to irresistible political pressure in the country concerned for its contingent to be withdrawn. She had had to intervene to turn round Parliamentary opinion on the presence of the British contingent. It was steady at the moment and would continue to be so, barring another major incident. She was worried at the implications of the assassination of the President of AUB. The MNF contributors should have a contingency plan for dealing with the situation created by another major terrorist attack on the MNF.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that he had discussed these issues in the last few days with Mr. Shultz, Mr. Andreotti and M. Cheysson. Italy had reduced its MNF contingent. The Italian President had recently repeated his view that the Italian contingent should leave. The French were reducing their troops. We had also noted the upsurge of opinion in the United States a few weeks ago against the continuing presence of American troops. The balance of opinion in any one of the four contributing countries was liable to oscillate and could quickly change in the event of another catastrophe. He had told

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the Syrian Foreign Minister that the West would not leave a vacuum behind; thus the MNF would stay until, for example, a UN force was in being. But for the reasons explained by the Prime Minister, the confidence which we expressed on this matter was in fact fragile. All this underlined the urgency of progress towards a solution. He had just seen the Lebanese Foreign Minister who had confirmed that the Lebanon security agreement was blocked by the difficulty about the promotion of Druze officers. Mr. Salem had said that the Druze position probably ought to be accepted, for the sake of getting an agreement. But the question of national reconciliation was much more difficult. The Syrians said that the Geneva Conference could not resume until the 17 May Agreement had been abrogated. The Prime Minister emphasised the need to produce a forward move in the reconciliation process. Mr. Rumsfeld said that the biggest problem was the weakness in MNF capitals. He had emphasised to the Italian and French Foreign Ministers that if the collapse of the MNF were brought about by terrorist action, that would be deplorable. For this was precisely the purpose of such terrorism. We should make it clear in advance that we recognised the danger of terrorist incidents, but that these would not deflect us from our purpose. It was impossible to negotiate with Syria if the latter believed that the MNF would be leaving in the next few weeks. The Prime Minister repeated that the British contingent was the only one which carried out patrols. A single shell on our Headquarters could lead to the deaths of the whole contingent. We would continue to reiterate our firmness in public, but as a politician she knew that one major incident could produce an unstoppable tide of opinion. Hence the need for a contingency plan. It would probably be necessary for a United Nations force to take over. Mr. Rumsfeld pointed out that a UN force would not enter a situation of chaos.

It was possible that a security plan would be agreed in the next week or so. The Saudis, the Israelis and the US were working in this direction. But Jumblatt had now been allowed by the Syrians to produce his fifth excuse for not endorsing it. It was not really the Druze issue which prevented Gemayel

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settling - it was his fear that if that issue were settled, Jumblatt would produce another objection. But it was possible that in the end Jumblatt would let the plan go ahead without positively agreeing to it.

The Americans were now working very hard with the Israelis and the Lebanese for partial Israeli withdrawal. Shamir had taken no decision, but clearly a partial withdrawal would have many good effects and would be a sign of progress for Gemayel. It was difficult for Shamir to make the running on this because the Israeli opposition were advocating such a move. So the Americans were applying the pressure instead. The difficulty for the Lebanese Government in Israeli withdrawal was that they would then have to move scarce troops south to police a new area. The Israelis might withdraw from west to east rather than from north to south, but they were bound to maintain their positions on the Syrian border until the last phase.

He had spent four hours with President Gemayel two days ago. For six weeks now the Americans had been pressing him to produce a reconciliation plan and political reforms. It was possible that he would do so in the next fourteen days. Gemayel would not be able to produce a broadly-based Government because the Syrians were preventing this. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that it looked as though a unilateral declaration of national unity was envisaged. But the real process of reconciliation was blocked by Syria because of the 17 May Agreement. Mr. Rumsfeld observed that the Syrians could only prevent Jumblatt and Berri from joining the broadly-based Government. But Gemayel could broaden the Government by including the National Salvation Front and perhaps Franjieh.

Syria claimed that the 17 May Agreement was an infringement of Lebanese sovereignty and an obstacle to the reconciliation process. This was not true. The Israeli and Lebanese Governments had agreed to put all these elements on the table in the negotiating process and to seek a compromise. Gemayel felt that if the 17 May Agreement were abrogated the Israelis would not leave

/ Lebanon

Lebanon. Assad was playing the West like an accordion. He was accusing Gemayel of presiding over a narrowly-based Government but blocking a broadly-based one. Syrian artillery was deployed in the Lebanon in such a way as to intimidate Gemayel. Assad was behaving like this because he saw a prospect of MNF withdrawal. He perceived that the West could carry out operations in Grenada and the Falklands but had not learned to cope with the terrorist environment. The Prime Minister said that there was no way of dealing with terrorists who could retreat across the border.

Mr. Rumsfeld said that there were a certain number of levers. There was the concern of people around Assad about Syria's isolation in the Arab world. Secondly, Syria wanted a degree of independence from the Soviet Union and contacts with the West to ensure this. Thirdly, Syria and the Soviet Union wanted the MNF to leave - they saw its presence as the only thing preventing them dominating the Lebanese Government. There was much speculation that we should persuade Syria and the Soviet Union that UN troops should replace the MNF. This was getting things the wrong way round. The Syrians and the Russians ought to concede something for the departure of the MNF. For United Nations troops to be deployed in the south or north of the Lebanon, or even in the refugee camps, was one thing. But the MNF should not leave Beirut until we had extracted concessions from the Syrians. The big card was the presence of Israeli forces 23 km from Damascus. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that he was not sure how strong this card was. Assad believed that the Israeli Government was in political trouble because of the Israeli presence in the Lebanon and that Israeli troops might consequently have to leave. The Prime Minister thought that it would be optimistic to think in terms of more than partial Israeli withdrawal and some extension of Gemayel's authority. Mr. Rumsfeld commented that it was possible that Assad did believe that he could wait for Israeli withdrawal. But much of the pressure on the Israeli Government would be relieved if there were a partial withdrawal. The only bright hope was the physical presence of Israel on the Syrian border. This complicated life for the

/ Syrians

Syrians who did not forget that they had been worsted by Israel in four wars. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary observed that in that case Syria would be grateful to avoid war. It would continue to play a waiting game.

Mr. Rumsfeld repeated that President Gemayel felt that he had to close the Shuweifat Gap. The Prime Minister said that in that case he must consult closely with us. Mr. Rumsfeld said that he did not know whether Gemayel would have the nerve to make this move or whether he could get the political agreement which would be necessary to allow him to do it. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that the Lebanese Foreign Minister had recognised in their earlier discussion that if an attempt were made to close the Gap by military force, the ceasefire would be ruined and the position of the MNF altered. He had added that any move to close the Gap was a long way down the road; and following such a move all MNF contributors would want to reconsider their role.

Mr. Rumsfeld suggested that pressure should be put on the Syrians to move their artillery back. There was no reason for it to be in its existing positions. The Lebanese Government was no longer entirely sustained by the presence of the MNF because of the constant stories that it would leave. The risk that the MNF would depart made the Lebanese leadership more desperate. Gemayel felt that he was losing the support of his people. One was beginning to hear suggestions that if there could be no political solution, there would have to be a military solution. The Lebanese Government had 35,000 troops and, in a military solution, would be fighting only the Druze. If the Syrians continued to resist a political solution, this resort to military action could take place.

Mr. Rumsfeld said that he would now be returning to Washington for discussions with Mr. Shultz and Mr. MacFarlane. But there was no way of producing a neatly packaged solution - there were no home-run balls.

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The Prime Minister repeated her concern that another terrorist outrage against the US contingent could, in an election year, lead to irresistible demands for its withdrawal. There should be planning against that contingency.

Mr. Rumsfeld said that the Lebanese Government were now asking questions about the readiness of the US Navy to extend its activity. They felt that if Beirut were covered by an umbrella of US naval guns, and it was clear that the US would respond if the Syrians, the Druze or anyone else shelled Beirut, they would have more scope. He had explained to them that the role of the MNF was to respond only to attacks on the MNF. But this did not stop the suggestion being repeated. The Prime Minister said that to embark on such a course would be a major decision. US troops would be in the Lebanon for years. In conclusion, Mr. Rumsfeld said that the Lebanon had four options: a political solution, military action, perhaps with MNF involvement, to close the Shuweifat Gap; a request to Israel for the protection of Beirut; a request for Syrian protection. Those options apart, the prospect was of continued erosion. The Lebanese Government felt they could not let things deteriorate for another six months. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary repeated that the Syrian attitude towards the 17 May Agreement remained a major obstacle. Mr. Rumsfeld disputed this. The Agreement had already been put on one side. It was an element on the negotiating table. Assad's attitude would not change if the Agreement were abrogated.

The discussion ended at 1900 hours.

A.J.C.

20 January 1984

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

19 January 1984

Dear John,

Lebanon/MNF: Prime Minister's Meeting
with Mr Rumsfeld, 20 January.

Since my letter of 13 January, Sir Geoffrey Howe and the Prime Minister have discussed the situation in Lebanon with Mr Shultz. You will also have seen reports on Sir Geoffrey Howe's conversations on Lebanon in Stockholm with Signor Andreotti, M Cheysson and Mr Gromyko. You will want a report of where things now stand in preparation for the meeting with Mr Rumsfeld on 20 January, for which I enclose a brief.

Mr Shultz appeared confident that the pendulum of opinion in the United States was swinging back, away from an early withdrawal of the MNF. He also claimed that the Syrians only became intransigent when the resolve of MNF contributors was seen to be weakening. Rumsfeld will no doubt repeat the line that MNF contributors should stand firm and that ideas for amending or replacing the 17 May Israel/Lebanon agreement in the hope of inducing Syrian flexibility are misguided. At a later meeting with Sir Geoffrey in Stockholm Mr Shultz was, however, more receptive to the idea of finding a way round the difficulties presented by the 17 May agreement. But the tactical line he suggested (talking about withdrawal without mentioning the agreement) may not be enough to get round the obstacle.

Sir Geoffrey Howe's conversation with Signor Andreotti (Stockholm telegram No 13) revealed a close identity on views on the way ahead in Lebanon. He was opposed to unilateral action by MNF contributors. He agreed that the Americans needed to show more flexibility on the 17 May agreement, if the Syrians were to be persuaded to allow progress with national reconciliation. He was attracted by the idea of a package, with an agreed timetable for the withdrawal of forces, and favoured somehow "integrating" the 17 May agreement into new proposals of this sort, without abrogating it. Andreotti undertook to discuss Lebanon in his meetings with Shultz and Gromyko. He made a point of thanking us for our efforts to improve consultation among MNF representatives in London.

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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/M Cheysson



M Cheysson (FCO telegram No 48 to Paris) described the May 17 agreement as a "blunder" but did not think the US would agree to set it aside in the immediate future. Meanwhile he thought it best to concentrate on the extension of UNIFIL's mandate, which the French have been pursuing in contacts with the Soviet Union. The accounts of M Cheysson's meeting with Gromyko are encouraging (he has proved over optimistic in his assessment of the Soviet position in the past, although on this occasion his account is in part borne out by what Gromyko said to Sir Geoffrey - see below). The main Soviet concern is that wider deployment of UN forces should not be authorised by the Security Council without withdrawal of the MNF. Once reassured on this point, Gromyko suggested that the French should speak to the Syrians and appeared ready to tell the Syrians that the Soviet Union favoured the proposal. The French plan to follow this up in Damascus. Cheysson has undertaken to report the outcome. We shall see.

A In his meeting with Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr Gromyko took much the same line as with Cheysson (UKDel CDE telegram No 22 enclosed). Although he stressed that the MNF should be withdrawn, he did not take issue with the suggestion that the UNIFIL role should be expanded, saying that this was a question for the Syrians and the Lebanese.

B Meeting with Mr Rumsfeld

As you will see from the enclosed brief, we believe the main points to stress to Mr Rumsfeld are that

- (A) We will not (not) withdraw precipitately from Beirut. But we see the MNF as a wasting asset. It cannot stay indefinitely and we have said so publicly. We must make progress towards replacing it as soon as this can reasonably be envisaged. We should not (not) underestimate the pressures on the MNF contributors to withdraw following another bomb attack with heavy casualties.
- (B) Being tough with the Syrians (including retaliation for attack on MNF) will not (not) persuade them to be flexible. They need to be given the right incentives, notably a signal of US willingness to put the 17 May agreement on one side. Agree MNF should show solidarity.
- (C) UN role. Our objective should be to replace the MNF with a UN force. We agree that this cannot be done in the immediate future. We need to avoid giving the Russians a tactical advantage by appearing to be in too much of a rush.



Next Steps

Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr Luce will be taking the opportunity during meetings with the Lebanese Foreign Minister, Dr Salem, to impress on him the need for President Gemayel to give clear evidence of his readiness to make necessary concessions, notably over the latest Security plan and thereafter to show his willingness to discuss major constitutional reforms to allow the national reconciliation process to move forward (with Syrian acquiescence).

We also hope that Mr Rumsfeld or his colleagues will let us have detailed US reactions to our paper on UN options. A further meeting of officials to discuss comments in our paper will be held on 23 January.

Action by the Ten

Sir Geoffrey Howe will be seeing colleagues in the Ten in Brussels on 23 January. We will aim to ensure that the Ten review the situation, and that they maintain a generally helpful line. There may be some discussion of a possible further statement. The fact that the Ten have ideas of their own may of course help to induce the Americans to keep in closer touch with their MNF colleagues.

Arab/Israel

C Although Mr Rumsfeld has hitherto devoted nearly all his attention to Lebanon his responsibilities cover the whole Middle East. The Prime Minister may wish to tell him of our concern about the dangers of a prolonged stalemate in the peace process for the moderate Arab regimes, and especially Jordan. The Prime Minister wrote to President Reagan about this on 22 December but has not yet had a reply.

This letter and the points we propose the Prime Minister should make reflect discussion with Sir Geoffrey Howe, although he has not seen the final text. I shall be showing him a copy on his return.

Yours ever,

Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

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FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY
SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETING WITH GROMYKO ON 19 JANUARY: MIDDLE
EAST

1. SECRETARY OF STATE RAISED THE MIDDLE EAST AS AN EXAMPLE
OF AN AREA IN WHICH INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENCE NEEDED TO BE
RESTORED. AS PART OF A CONCERTED INTERNATIONAL EFFORT WE
HOPED THE SOVIET UNION WOULD ENCOURAGE SYRIA TO ADOPT A
CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE BOTH IN THE MAIN ARAB/ISRAELI DISPUTE IN
GENERAL AND SPECIFICALLY OVER PEACE IN LEBANON.

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2. GROMYKO SAID THAT THE SOVIET POSITION ON LEBANON WAS CLEAR. UK, US, ITALIAN AND FRENCH TROOPS SHOULD ALL BE PULLED OUT. THEY ONLY COMPLICATED THE SITUATION. THE LEBANESE SHOULD SETTLE THEIR OWN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. THE SOVIET UNION COULD NOT SPEAK FOR SYRIA. THE SYRIANS HAD, HOWEVER, MADE THEIR POSITION CLEAR ON MANY OCCASIONS. IF ALL ISRAELI AND US TROOPS WERE PULLED OUT FIRST, THE SYRIANS WOULD ALSO WITHDRAW. THIS WOULD CREATE CONDITIONS IN WHICH THE VARIOUS FACTIONS IN LEBANON COULD SORT OUT THEIR OWN AFFAIRS AND RALLY BEHIND A COALITION GOVERNMENT OF SOME SORT. THE US SHOULD WITHDRAW NOT ONLY ITS GROUND FORCES BUT ALSO ITS SHIPS WHICH WERE CURRENTLY SHELLING LEBANESE CITIES.

3. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT THE MNF TROOPS WERE THERE TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE LEBANESE PEOPLE TO COME TOGETHER AND SUPPORT A SINGLE GOVERNMENT. WE FEARED THAT IF THE MNF WAS WITHDRAWN NOW THERE COULD BE MUCH BLOODSHED IN AND AROUND BEIRUT. WE THOUGHT IT SENSIBLE FOR A UN FORCE TO BE PUT IN OR THE FUNCTIONS OF THE EXISTING UN FORCES EXPANDED. THE SECRETARY OF STATE HOPED THAT GROMYKO WOULD GIVE THIS POSITIVE CONSIDERATION. OUR OBJECTIVE WAS THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN FORCES FROM THE LEBANON, INCLUDING THE MNF.

4. THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAD ANOTHER WORD ABOUT LEBANON/UN ON THE WAY OUT. GROMYKO SAID THAT THE KEY THING WAS TO REMOVE THE MNF. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT CHEYSSON HAD RAISED THE UN QUESTION WITH HIM IN VERY SIMILAR TERMS TO THOSE USED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE. GROMYKO SAID THAT IT WAS REALLY A QUESTION FOR THE SYRIANS AND FOR THE LEBANESE FROM WHOM A PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE TO COME. JEMAYEL WAS NOT THE WHOLE OF THE LEBANON (THOUGH GROMYKO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE WAS PART OF IT). IN SHORT GROMYKO HAD AMPLE OCCASION TO SAY NO AND DID NOT DO SO.

EDES

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SENT AT 191516Z HHXV~~XXXX~~

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR RUMSFELD, 20 JANUARY: LEBANON/MNF

Points to Make

MNF

1. We are firmly not arguing for precipitate withdrawal. Determined to avoid a vacuum. But MNF is essentially temporary. Have made both points clear publicly. Public anxiety here, as in other MNF countries, remains strong and any major incident would require action.

Security Situation

2. Very sorry to hear of murder of President of American University in Beirut. Rumsfeld's assessment of chances of implementation of Security Plan?

How to Tackle the Syrians

3. Welcome account of Rumsfeld's talks, especially with Syrians. Syria holds key. Clearly very confident that MNF (and Israelis) are on their way home, without need for Syrian concessions. Agree on need for resolve to correct that impression. But cannot expect to use departure of MNF as a lever to get Syrians out of Lebanon.

4. Tough stance, including retaliation for attacks on MNF forces, will not work on its own. A way round the 17 May Agreement has to be found. Syria more likely to cooperate if she receives clear signal of US willingness to set agreement aside and discuss other ways of achieving Israeli withdrawal, in return for satisfactory security arrangements. If that obstacle can be surmounted, some hope of Syrian flexibility on withdrawal of their forces, provided that proposals do not put them on same basis as Israelis. Timetable of phased withdrawals, with added incentive of MNF withdrawal, would be the ideal.

6. We can see no other basis for constructive dialogue with Syria. Willing to help eg in pursuing discussions with Foreign Minister Khaddam.

UN Options

7. We intend to pursue options for alternatives to MNF. Essential

to have replacement ready in case MNF withdrawal becomes necessary. US reactions to UK paper? Need to agree on best way of tackling this: approach to Lebanese Government and Soviet Union needed before Secretary General can act.

Lebanese Government

8. Also need to keep up pressure on President Gemayel to signal willingness to make genuine concessions Have stressed this to Foreign Minister Salem today (20 January).

Action by Ten

9. Will continue discussions within Ten to see whether we can take any helpful action.

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PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR RUMSFELD, 20 JANUARY 1984

Essential Facts

1. Mr Rumsfeld is on his way back to Washington after over two weeks shuttling between Lebanon, Syria and Israel and Saudi Arabia, with an additional visit to Algeria. He has not secured any progress which the US Administration can use to stave off pressure from Congress (due to reassemble on 23 January). But the Americans now think that domestic pressure for withdrawal of the US Marines will be manageable, after Senator Tower's visit to the Middle East and clear signals from moderate Arabs that the MNF should stay put.
2. The State Department have told us of Mr Rumsfeld's view that the presence of the MNF in Beirut is a "valuable bargaining chip" with the Russians and Syrians, who should be made to 'pay a high price' for its withdrawal. This seems to us optimistic, given Syrian confidence that the MNF (and the Israelis) will soon withdraw without the need for Syrian concessions. The Americans still believe that the only way of softening Syrian intransigence is for MNF contributors to stand firm and for US forces to respond in 'robust self-defence' (ie naval/air bombardment) to any attacks on their forces. But in a meeting in Stockholm Mr Shultz appeared a little more receptive to the suggestion that a way had to be found round the 17 May Israel/Lebanon agreement.

Security Situation

3. Although the ceasefire has generally held in the sense of freezing movement of ground forces, there has been a marked deterioration recently. US warships responded to Druze attacks on US Marines on 15 January. There have been heavy exchanges of fire between Druze and Christian militias and heavy shelling of East Beirut by the Druze, who have threatened to retaliate in this fashion whenever they are bombarded by US forces.
4. In Beirut, Islamic Jihad (assumed to be Lebanese Shia extremists operating with Iranian support) have claimed responsibility for the assassination of the President of the American University of Beirut, Mr Kerr on 18 January and the kidnapping of the Saudi Consul (they

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also claimed responsibility for the October 1983 bomb attacks on French and US contingents). There have been a number of other recent attacks on "soft" targets: hit and run shootings of a French Embassy driver and the wife of French Cultural Attaché.

Multinational Force

5. Reductions in Italian (2200 to 1500) and French (1750 to 1250 with the balance returning to UNIFIL) contingents are due to be completed this month. Attacks on French and US contingents continue: attack on US helicopter deep inside LAF-controlled West Beirut. Systematic attacks on French positions: one French paratrooper killed and one wounded in attack on 9 January.

National Reconciliation

6. We have had no report yet of the meeting of Saudi, Syrian and Lebanese Foreign Ministers in the margins of the Casablanca Islamic Conference this week, which was supposed to follow up the meeting in Riyadh on 8 January. Implementation of the security plan is still held up, with the Druze leader Jumblatt (according to Lebanese government) now insisting on abrogation of the 17 May agreement before the plan can be implemented. This may be tactical. In any case, early implementation of any security arrangements allowing the Lebanese army to deploy more widely, now appears unlikely. The Syrian veto *on any* progress on national reconciliation without abrogation of the 17 May agreement remains.

UN Forces

7. Rumsfeld may have some detailed comments to offer on the UK paper on UN options. The Americans agree in principle with the idea of replacing the MNF by a UN force eventually, but do not want MNF contributors to push for this now, which will in their view only encourage Syrian/Soviet intransigence.

Near East and North Africa Dept

19 January 1984

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- pte arrange transmission of signed original.

~~Mr. ...~~
~~Mr. ...~~
~~Mr. ...~~

10 DOWNING STREET

I have sent text by tel

22 December 1983

From the Private Secretary

fa R L ...

PS
PS/Mr Wale
PS/RUS

Dear Sir,

Sir T Bullard
Sir T Leahy
Mr Eytz

Message from the Prime Minister to President Reagan about her meeting with King Hussein

Thank you for the draft message to President Reagan enclosed with your letter of 19 December.

The Prime Minister has now signed a revised version of the message and I enclose it. I should be grateful if you could arrange for the text of the message to be delivered before the holidays and for the signed version to follow thereafter.

Your ever

for Wale

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P.F. Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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| DEPARTMENT/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i> PIECE/ITEM <i>1403</i> (one piece/item number) | Date and sign |
| Extract/Item details: <i>PM to US President dated 22 December 1983</i> | |
| CLOSED FOR YEARS UNDER FOI EXEMPTION | |
| RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958 | |
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Enter the Department, Series and Piece/Item references clearly
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| DEPARTMENT/SERIES | <i>GRA 168</i> |
| PIECE/ITEM | <i>49</i> |
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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

18 January 1984

Mr. Donald Rumsfeld

Thank you for your letter of 16 January.

The Prime Minister could see Mr. Rumsfeld at 1730 hours on Friday, 20 January. I believe that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary will have returned from Stockholm by then - the Prime Minister would be grateful if he was able to attend her meeting with Mr. Rumsfeld.

A. J. COLES

P.F. Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister.

Do you want to see

Mr. Krumfeld at 5.30 p.m.

on Friday?

A. J. C. $\frac{16}{1}$.

Yes
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Def. Fried, etc.
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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

16 January 1984

Dear John,

Mr Donald Rumsfeld

The US Embassy have told us that President Reagan's Special Middle East Envoy, Mr Donald Rumsfeld, plans to be in London on 20 January, and have formally approached us to ask whether the Prime Minister would be willing to receive him. They have suggested a meeting on the afternoon of 20 January. Mr Rumsfeld is also seeking meetings with President Mitterrand and the Italian Prime Minister.

Although Mr Rumsfeld currently has the title of Ambassador, he is also a former US Defence Secretary. He believes that he should, in pursuit of his task, establish contact at head of government level both in the Middle East and elsewhere. Sir Geoffrey Howe would normally expect to see Mr Rumsfeld himself. He will, however, be away for most of 20 January in Stockholm. In these circumstances, he ~~recommends that the Prime Minister should agree to receive Mr Rumsfeld briefly.~~ Mr Rumsfeld has played an influential role in formulating the current policy of cutting Syria down to size, and it is clear that if there is to be any modification in the attitude of the US Government towards the agreement of 17 May between Israel and Lebanon his advice will carry weight. A meeting with the Prime Minister would be an opportunity to remove any misunderstandings Mr Rumsfeld may have about the depth of our anxiety about the role of the MNF in Lebanon. The Prime Minister might also wish to mention to Mr Rumsfeld our concern about the effects on the moderate Arab countries, especially on the position of King Hussein, of the present stagnation in the Middle East peace process.

Sir Geoffrey suggests that the Prime Minister might wish to be accompanied by Mr Luce if she agrees to receive Mr Rumsfeld, and on the assumption that Sir Geoffrey will not himself be back from Stockholm. If Sir Geoffrey were to be back, he would, I think, wish to attend the meeting himself.

Yours ever,
(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

Peter Ricketts

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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16 JAN 1984



