



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Prime Minister

London SW1A 2AH

A.F.C. 23/9

23 September 1983

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Dear John,

Lebanon

During yesterday's briefing meeting for her visit to Washington, the Prime Minister asked for a factual paper covering some aspects of our position in Lebanon. I enclose a paper, which includes an annex on the terms of reference and task of British forces in Belize.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (MOD) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street



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LEBANON: BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE

The MNF Mandate

1 The Multinational Force, originally composed of US, French and Italian contingents, was first deployed in Beirut in August 1982. It had the limited mandate of supervising the evacuation of PLO and other forces from the city, under an agreement negotiated by Mr Habib following Israel's invasion of Lebanon and siege of Beirut.

2 The MNF returned to Beirut in September 1982 following the massacres in the Palestinian refugee camps. This time its mandate was (to quote from the agreements between the Lebanese and MNF contributing governments) 'To provide an inter-position force at agreed locations and thereby provide a multinational presence to assist the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in the Beirut area. This presence will facilitate the restoration of Lebanese Government sovereignty and authority over the Beirut area, and thereby further efforts of the (Lebanese) Government to assure the safety of persons in the area.' Present strength of contingents: US 1200 (plus 2,600 Marines offshore), France 2000, Italy 2000.


The British Contingent

3 The Lebanese Foreign Minister made a formal request for British participation in the MNF in a letter to the Foreign Secretary on 11 November 1982. He followed up his request in meetings with the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister during his visit to London in December 1983. Dr Salem made clear that it was not so much a military contribution the Lebanese wanted as a gesture of political support from an important Western power.

4 It was subsequently agreed that Britain would provide a token contribution to the MNF. The 97 man (now just over 100) British contingent (BRITFORLEB), initially drawn from our forces with UNFICYP in Cyprus, arrived in Beirut on 8 February 1983. The Exchange of Letters with the Lebanese Government (copy attached) sets out the terms of its deployment. This quotes from the mandate for the other contingents (para 2 above) and specifies that the British contingent will 'carry out such tasks as may be agreed between the United Kingdom and Lebanese Governments consistent with the mandate of the MNF'.

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5 In practice the role of the British contingent has been slightly different from the others. Apart from our HQ in south-east Beirut, we man no fixed positions. Instead we provide mobile patrols throughout the city. Other contingents have been largely confined to specific areas: the Americans around Beirut International Airport, the Italians around Palestinian refugee camps in the suburbs of West Beirut, and the French further north in the built-up area of the city (see attached).

A Changing MNF Role?

6 Despite pressure from the Lebanese for wider deployment, the role of the MNF has not changed, except for more aggressive action by US and French forces in self-defence. It is possible to argue that the original mandate of the MNF is largely fulfilled, in that the Lebanese Government has for the most part restored its authority over the Beirut area. The French have privately advanced this argument as justification for their plans to reduce their contingent to a purely symbolic presence (although they are willing to contribute to any new UN force which may be deployed outside Beirut). But since the clashes between the Lebanese Army and Muslim militias in southern suburbs of Beirut in late August 1983, there are once again areas of West Beirut which are not effectively under the control of the Lebanese Army or Government. There are also reports of PLO reinfiltration of the city.

7 During his visit to Beirut on 14 September Mr Luce found that both the Lebanese Government and the local population (of all communities) still greatly valued the presence of our contingent. It is above all the political importance of the MNF presence, as visible Western support for the Lebanese Government, which counts. Its military role could change if contributors were to agree to deploy in support of the Lebanese Army outside Beirut. But none of the contributors is willing to do so, at least as things are now and under the MNF label.

The US President, Congress and the War Powers Act

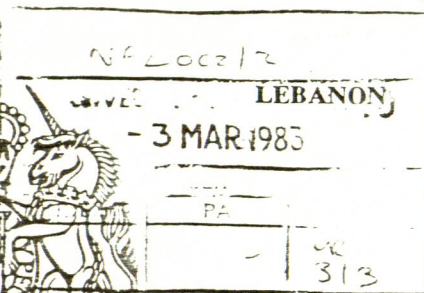
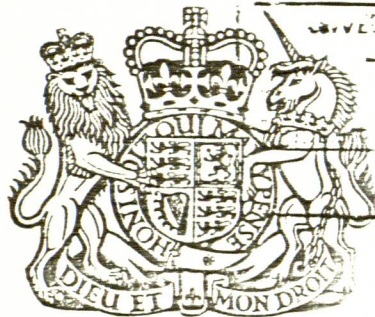
8 There has been a long running dispute between the US Administration and Congress over the applicability of the War Powers Act to the situation in Lebanon. The War Powers Act was passed by Congress in 1973, over President Nixon's veto, to 'prevent another Vietnam'. It specifies (Article 4(A)) that in the absence of a declaration of war the US President must report to Congress within 48 hours of introducing US forces 'into hostilities or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated' justifying the deployment.



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Article 5(B) provides that such deployment must end within 60 days unless Congress approves its extension, though the President can extend that period by another 30 days. The Administration and Congressional leaders have now agreed that a resolution will be put to the Senate and Congress which finds that the War Powers Act does apply to the present situation in Lebanon and authorizes the deployment of US forces for 18 months from the date of its enactment. Only the existing role of the US MNF contingent is authorised: any significant expansion in its size or role would require Congressional approval. The US Administration maintain that, even after the 18 months have elapsed, the President will still have the power to keep US forces in Lebanon without Congressional authorisation. The resolution is therefore an attempt to buy time without resolving the constitutional position.

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Treaty Series No. 9 (1983)

Exchange of Notes

between the Government of the
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
and the Government of the Lebanese Republic
concerning the Deployment of a
British Contingent for the
Multi-National Force in Lebanon

Beirut, 31 January 1983

[The Agreement entered into force on 31 January 1983]

*Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
by Command of Her Majesty
March 1983*

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**EXCHANGE OF NOTES
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE LEBANESE REPUBLIC CONCERNING
THE DEPLOYMENT OF A BRITISH CONTINGENT
FOR THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN LEBANON**

No. 1

*The Deputy-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lebanon to
Her Majesty's Ambassador at Beirut*

*Ministère des Affaires Étrangères
et des Libanais d'Ouverture-Mer
Beirut*

31 January 1983

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to the discussions which have taken place between representatives of our two Governments concerning the establishment of a temporary Multi-National Force (MNF) in the Beirut area. The Mandate of the MNF is to provide an interposition Force at agreed locations and thereby provide a multi-national presence to assist the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in the Beirut area. This presence will facilitate the restoration of Lebanese Government sovereignty and authority over the Beirut area, and thereby further efforts of my Government to assure the safety of persons in the area. The MNF may undertake other functions only by mutual agreement among Governments. The MNF is currently composed of contingents of the Armed Forces of France, Italy and the United States of America.

In the foregoing context, I have the honour to propose that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland deploy a Force of approximately 100 personnel to Beirut for a period of three months, subject to the following terms and conditions:

- (i) The British Military Force shall carry out such tasks as may be agreed between the United Kingdom and Lebanese Governments, consistent with the Mandate of the MNF;
- (ii) Command authority over the British Force will be exercised exclusively by the British Government through existing British Diplomatic and Military Channels;
- (iii) The LAF and MNF will form a Liaison and Co-ordination Committee, composed of representatives of the MNF participating Governments and Chaired by the Representatives of my Government. The Liaison and Co-ordination Committee will have two essential components:
 - (a) supervisory liaison; and
 - (b) military and technical liaison and co-ordination;

- (iv) The British Force will operate in close co-ordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces. To assure effective co-ordination with the LAF, the British Force will assign liaison Officers to the LAF and the Government of Lebanon will assign Liaison Officers to the British Force. The LAF Liaison Officers to the British Force will, *inter alia*, perform liaison with the civilian population and with the United Nations Observers and manifest the authority of the Lebanese Government in all appropriate situations. The British Force will provide security for LAF personnel operating with the UK Contingent;
- (v) In carrying out its duties, the British Force will not engage in hostilities or other operations of a warlike nature. It may, however, exercise the right of self-defence;
- (vi) Notwithstanding the time limits proposed above, the British Force will depart from Lebanon upon the request of the President of Lebanon or upon the decision of the British Government. Any proposal for renewal of the Mandate would be subject to consultation between the Government of the Lebanon and Her Majesty's Government and the agreement of both parties.
- (vii) The Government of Lebanon and the LAF will take all measures necessary to ensure the protection of the British Force's personnel (to include securing assurances from all armed elements not now under the authority of the Lebanese Government that they will refrain from hostilities and not interfere with any activities of the MNF);
- (viii) The British Force will enjoy both the degree of freedom and movement and the right to undertake those activities deemed necessary for the performance of its mission for the support of its personnel. Accordingly, the members of the British Force shall enjoy the privileges and immunities accorded the technical and administrative staff of the British Embassy in Beirut, and shall be exempt from Immigration and Customs requirements, and restrictions on entering or departing from Lebanon. The appropriate British authorities may exercise jurisdiction over the British Force in accordance with British Service Law. Personnel, property and equipment of the British Force introduced into Lebanon shall be exempt from any form of tax, duty, charge or levy.

I have the further honour to propose, if the foregoing is acceptable to Your Excellency's Government, that Your Excellency's reply to that effect, together with this Note, shall constitute an Agreement between our two Governments which shall come into force on the date of Your Excellency's reply.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

ELIE A. SALEM

No. 2

*Her Majesty's Ambassador at Beirut to the
Deputy-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lebanon*

*British Embassy
Beirut*

31 January 1983

Your Excellency.

I have the honour to refer to Your Excellency's Note of the 31st of January 1983 requesting the deployment of a British Force to the Beirut area in the following terms.

[As in No. 1]

I am pleased to inform you that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is prepared to deploy for the period of 3 months a Force of approximately 100 personnel.

I have the further honour to inform Your Excellency that my Government accepts the terms and conditions concerning the presence of the British Force in the Beirut area as set forth in your Note, and that Your Excellency's Note and this reply accordingly constitute an Agreement between our two Governments which shall come into force today.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

D. A. ROBERTS

Beirut: Multinational Force Areas of Responsibility





BELIZE : BRITISH GARRISON : ROLE AND MANDATE

1. Only treaty in force on the status of British troops in Belize is Exchange of Notes of 1 December 1981. It provides that our forces will 'perform such functions as the two Governments may agree'.
2. In addition there is a secret exchange of letters between Mr Ridley and Mr Price of September/October 1981. Mr Ridley's letter states: '...the UK Government will maintain a garrison in Belize for the defence of Belize against external threat for up to nine months'... 'It is no part of the function of the British garrison to assist in or otherwise take part in operations concerned with internal security or with the enforcement of law and order'. The period of nine months has been extended by subsequent confidential messages.
3. The role and scope of the garrison is formally set out in the 1981 Chief of Defence Staff's Directive to the Commander of the British Forces Belize and in the contingency Rules of Engagement. The main task is defined as to assist the Belize Defence Force in the defence of Belize against external aggression by Guatemala or any other country and to take all necessary action to deter and, if necessary, to repel Guatemalan aggression. Ground forces are to be confined to Belizean territory which is to be patrolled regularly. Aircraft are to patrol over Belizean territory and territorial waters, to provide air reconnaissance and to act as a deterrent.