

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES

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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 2391 OF 9 JULY

INFO IMMEDIATE TEL AVIV, DAMASCUS, UKMIS NEW YORK, PRIORITY CAIRO,  
PARIS, MOSCOW, JEDDA, AMMAN, TUNIS.

LEBANON

1. EAGLEBURGER TOLD ME TODAY THAT BREZHNEV'S MESSAGE TO REAGAN (MOSCOW TELNO 382 - NOT TO ALL) WAS, LIKE THE THREE PREVIOUS SUCH MESSAGES ON LEBANON, IN VERY RESTRAINED TERMS. IN ADDITION TO THE POINTS IN THE TASS STATEMENT, BREZHNEV MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE RUSSIANS FAVOURED A U N PEACE-KEEPING FORCE WITHOUT U.S. PARTICIPATION AND NOT LINKED SPECIFICALLY TO PLO WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON. IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT VIEW SOVIET EMPHASIS ON U N INVOLVEMENT REPRESENTS QUOTE THEIR WAY BACK IN UNQUOTE.

2. SOVIET EXPERTS IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT DO NOT ATTRIBUTE SOVIET RESTRAINT IN RELATION TO THE ISRAEL/LEBANON CRISIS TO BREZHNEV'S FAILING HEALTH AND QUOTE COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT UNQUOTE IN MOSCOW SO MUCH AS TO SOVIET CAUTION, THE EXTREME DIFFICULTY THEY ARE HAVING IN EXERCISING ANY EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE ON EVENTS, AND AN EXPECTATION ALSO THAT IN THE LONG RUN THE CRISIS WILL TURN TO

HAVING IN EXERCISING ANY EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE ON EVENTS; AND AN EXPECTATION ALSO THAT IN THE LONG RUN THE CRISIS WILL TURN TO THE POLITICAL BENEFIT OF THE SOVIET UNION. THE STATE DEPARTMENT BELIEVE THAT WHEN QADDUMI VISITED MOSCOW (MOSCOW TELNO 387) GROMYKO MADE CLEAR THAT THE RUSSIANS WOULD RE-SUPPLY THE SYRIANS BUT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DO MORE THAN THEY WERE DOING. IN PARTICULAR THE AMERICANS BELIEVE THE RUSSIANS SOUGHT TO DISABUSE THE SYRIANS (AND THE PLO) OF ANY EXPECTATION THAT THEY WOULD SEND SHIPS TO THE AREA.

3. THE WHITE HOUSE HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT BREZHNEV'S MESSAGE WILL NOT AFFECT THE U.S. INTENTION TO PARTICIPATE IN A SHORT-TERM PEACE-KEEPING OPERATION IN WEST BEIRUT IF HABIB'S EFFORTS ARE SUCCESSFUL. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR CONFIRMED TO ME TODAY THAT THE FRENCH ARE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IF THERE IS A FORMAL REQUEST FROM THE LEBANESE AND THE OTHER PARTIES CONCERNED AGREE. THEY WOULD PREFER THE FORCE TO BE UNDER U N AUSPICES, BUT THIS IS NOT ESSENTIAL, PROVIDED THAT SOME FORM OF U N BLESSING COULD BE OBTAINED.

4. EAGLEBURGER COMMENTED THAT HABIB WAS NOW REASONABLY OPTIMISTIC. IN A SEPARATE BRIEFING OF WESTERN DIPLOMATS, CLUVERIOUS (STATE DEPARTMENT) SAID THAT THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF A PACKAGE DEAL WERE NOW BROADLY AGREED AND THAT THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT REACHING AGREEMENT ON THE MODALITIES OF IMPLEMENTATION. HE ADMITTED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS THAT AMONG THE ISSUES YET TO BE SETTLED WERE THE PLO'S RESIDUAL PRESENCE IN LEBANON, WHETHER THEY LEFT BY LAND OR SEA AND THE COMPOSITION OF TIMING OF DEPLOYMENT OF A MULTINATIONAL FORCE FOR BEIRUT. HE COULD NOT CONFIRM THAT THE SYRIANS HAD AGREED TO SUCH A FORCE, THOUGH THE ISRAELIS EVIDENTLY HAVE.

5. MAIL TO THE ADMINISTRATION AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IS SAID TO BE RUNNING STRONGLY AGAINST ISRAEL. BUT EAGLEBURGER DOES NOT THINK THAT THIS WILL BE MORE THAN A PASSING CHANGE IN AMERICAN ATTITUDES; THE UNDERLYING SENTIMENT IN HIS VIEW IS STILL THAT THE ISRAELIS DESERVE SUPPORT. COMMENTING ON RECENT MEDIA COMMENTARIES TO THE EFFECT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD TAKE A STRONGER LINE WITH ISRAEL, FAIRBANKS TOLD US IN CONFIDENCE TODAY THAT RECENT MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT TO BEGIN HAD BEEN MUCH TOUGHER. FOR EXAMPLE, THE LATEST MESSAGE URGING THE ISRAELIS TO REOPEN THE GALERIE SEMANE CROSSING POINT IN BEIRUT HAD CLEARLY IMPLIED THAT IF WAZZAN WERE UNABLE TO MEET HABIB, THE AMERICANS WOULD BE OBLIGED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE PLO DIRECTLY.

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6. I ASKED EAGLEBURGER ABOUT LONGER TERM AMERICAN GOALS IN LEBANON. HE SAID THAT THEY WERE THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN FORCES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REPRESENTATIVE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT EXCLUDING MAJOR HADDAD. HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THIS WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE ISRAELIS, (ALTHOUGH BEGIN INSISTED ON TREATING HADDAD AS AN ALLY) AND THAT THE SYRIANS COULD BE GOT OUT. HE NOTED THAT DESPITE THEIR PUBLIC PROTESTS THE ARABS HAD BEEN PRIVATELY CONSTRUCTIVE (HE WAS EVIDENTLY THINKING OF THE SAUDI ROLE IN PERSUADING ASAD TO ACCEPT PLO PERSONNEL FROM BEIRUT). HE ADDED THAT THE AMERICANS HAD TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO PERSUADE QADHAFI TO ACCEPT SOME PLO PERSONNEL.

HENDERSON

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