

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES

27/25

PS 6  
PS/MR HURD  
PS/PUS  
SIR J LEAHY  
MR MOBERLY  
SIR J BULLARD  
HD/NENAD  
HD/MED  
HD/UND  
HD/SEC DEPT  
HD/RES.D ...  
HD/CONSULAR DEPT

NO 10 DOWNING STREET

CABINET OFFICE D10

ADVANCE COPY

IMMEDIATE

Handwritten signature/initials

AD/NAD

PUSD (2)  
NEWS D  
RESIDENT CLERK

GRS 560

CONFIDENTIAL

FM MOSCOW 091418Z JUL 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 407 OF 9/7

INFO IMMEDIATE DAMASCUS, WASHINGTON

ROUTINE BEIRUT, AMMAN, TEL AVIV, UKMIS NEW YORK

Handwritten initials

LEBANON: MOSCOW TEL 392. BREZHNEV'S MESSAGE TO REAGAN.

1. THE US EMBASSY HERE BRIEFED US TODAY ON THE BACKGROUND TO BREZHNEV'S MESSAGE AS FOLLOWS. IT WAS DELIVERED BY DOBRYNIN TO STOESSEL ON 7 JULY. THE FORMER SHOWED A STRIKING IGNORANCE OF THE STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS. THOUGH THE THRUST OF THE ACTUAL MESSAGE WAS THE SAME AS THE TASS SUMMARY (TUR), THERE WERE "SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCES." THE EMBASSY WERE UNWILLING TO GO INTO DETAIL BUT CONFIRMED THAT THE TASS PHRASE THAT IF US TROOPS ENTERED LEBANON THE SOVIET UNION WOULD "BUILD ITS POLICY WITH DUE CONSIDERATION OF THIS FACT" APPEARED IN THE ORIGINAL. THE MESSAGE WAS TYPICALLY SHARP IN TONE, BLAMING THE UNITED STATES FOR FAILING TO CONDEMN ISRAEL AND EXPRESSING SUSPICION OF HABIB'S ACTIVITIES. BUT IT WAS ESSENTIALLY A CONTINUATION OF THE EARLIER BREZHNEV MESSAGES, AND SOUGHT TO MAKE THE MAXIMUM IMPACT WITHOUT INVOLVING THE SOVIET UNION OR CLOSING ITS OPTIONS. THE AMERICANS WERE NOT



THE SOVIET UNION OR CLOSING ITS OPTIONS. THE AMERICANS WERE NOT INCLINED TO TAKE THE MESSAGE ANY MORE SERIOUSLY THAN THE EARLIER ONES. AS TASS PUBLISHED ITS SUMMARY EARLY ON 8 JULY, THE EMBASSY ASSUMED PUBLICATION HAD BEEN INTENDED FROM THE START.

COMMENT.

2. EVEN PARTIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MESSAGE, AS THIS APPEARS TO BE, SUGGESTS THE RUSSIANS HAVE LITTLE REAL HOPE OF INFLUENCING US INTENTIONS. INSTEAD, THE MESSAGE PROBABLY HAD THREE IMMEDIATE

PURPOSES:

A. TO FURNISH A BASIS FOR FUTURE HOSTILE PROPAGANDA:

B. TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE ARABS THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS USING ITS POLITICAL WEIGHT AND TO SHOW MORE WIDELY THAT THE SOVIET UNION REMAINED AN ACTOR ON THE MIDDLE EAST STAGE (POSSIBLY PARTLY IN RESPONSE TO REPRESENTATIONS BY THE RECENTLY VISITING ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION

C. TO STIFFEN THE PALESTINIANS.

3. MORE FUNDAMENTALLY, THE PROSPECT OF THE PALESTINIANS VOLUNTARILY DEPARTING FROM LEBANON UNDER US PROTECTION MUST BE DEEPLY GALLING BY THE RUSSIANS AND REAGAN'S OFFER WAS SOMETHING TO WHICH THEY HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO REACT. SOVIET PRESS COVERAGE SEEKS TO SUGGEST THAT THE PALESTINIANS UNUTTERLY REJECT THE OFFER AND ARGUES (PRAVDA 9 JULY) THAT THE PURPOSE OF US TROOPS WOULD BE TO PROVIDE COVER FOR ISRAELI EXTERMINATION OF THE DISARMED PALESTINIAN FORCES. (THE US EMBASSY HAVE COMMENTED THAT DESPITE EFFORTS IN WASHINGTON TO EXPLAIN US MOTIVES THE RUSSIANS SEEM GENUINELY TO MISTRUST

THEM.) IF REAGAN'S OFFER OF TROOPS WERE TAKEN UP, EVEN AS PART OF A MULTINATIONAL FORCE, THIS WOULD STRIKINGLY UNDERLINE THE SOVIET UNION'S MARGINAL ROLE IN A CRISIS CLOSE TO ITS FRONTIERS, AND ITS STATUS, AT LEAST IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AS A SECOND CLASS SUPERPOWER.

BROOKE TURNER

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