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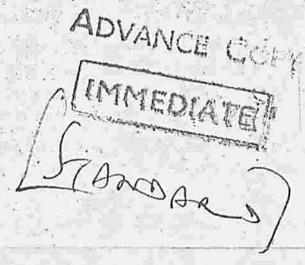
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GRS 560
CONFIDENTIAL
FM MOSCOW Ø91418Z JUL 82
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 407 OF 9/7
INFO IMMEDIATE DAMASCUS, WASHINGTON
ROUTINE BEIRUT, AMMAN, TEL AVIV, UKMIS NEW YORK

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 LGNORANCE
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 EMBASSASSUMED PUBLICATION HAD BEEN INTENDED FROM THE START.

CO MMENT.

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 RCENTLY VISITING
 ARAB LEAGUE DEL: EGATION
- C. TO STIFFEN THE PALESTINIANS.
- 3. MORE FUNDAMENTALLY, THE PROSPECT OF THE PALESTINIANS OLUNTARILY DEPARTING FROM LEBANON UNDER US PROTECTION MUST BE DEEPLY GALLING BH 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 UUUTTERAY 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, THISE 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