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TELNO 479

OF 271401Z DECEMBER 90

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, OTHER EC POSTS, BAGHDAD

YOUR TELNO: 2226 TO WASHINGTON: FUTURE OF EMBASSIES IN BAGHDAD

SUMMARY

1. NO DECISIONS LIKELY BEFORE THE NEW YEAR. POSSIBILITY THAT JUST THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR WILL REMAIN.

DETAIL

2. DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE MIDDLE EAST DEPARTMENT, MFA, TOLD ME TODAY THAT LITTLE THOUGHT HAD BEEN GIVEN SO FAR TO THE RUN-DOWN OF PERSONNEL IN THEIR EMBASSY IN BAGHDAD. THIS WAS PARTLY BECAUSE THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT WAS STILL HOPEFUL OF SOME FORM OF SETTLEMENT BEFORE 15 JANUARY AND PARTLY BECAUSE NO MORE THAN THREE PEOPLE WERE NOW LEFT IN THE MISSION. IF THE SITUATION WERE TO DETERIORATE AND A DECISION TO WITHDRAW HAD TO BE TAKEN, THEY WOULD PROBABLY LEAVE JUST THE AMBASSADOR EN POSTE. BUT MINISTERS WERE UNLIKELY TO FOCUS ON THIS BEFORE THE NEW YEAR.

MCCARTHY

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