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FM WASHINGTON 061800Z SEPT 83

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 2480 OF 6 SEPTEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK, BEIRUT, DAMASCUS, BRITFORLEB, UKMIS NEW YORK,
PRIORITY AMMAN, CAIRO, JEDDA, TUNIS, TEL AVIV, PARIS, ROME

BEIRUT TELNO 474: LEBANON

1. MACK (STATE DEPARTMENT) BRIEFED M N F CONTRIBUTORS THIS MORNING. NEGOTIATIONS FOR A SETTLEMENT WERE STILL IN PROGRESS (HE REFUSED TO BE DRAWN ON DETAILS). MCFARLANE WAS IN DAMASCUS TO TALK TO THE SYRIANS BUT NOT JUMBLATT. THE STATE DEPARTMENT BELIEVED THAT JUMBLATT WANTED AN AGREEMENT BUT WAS AFRAID OF THE SYRIANS. TUENI WAS EN ROUTE TO NEW YORK, APPARENTLY TO SEEK SECURITY COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT'S CALL FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN FORCES: THE AMERICANS DID NOT KNOW MORE PRECISELY WHAT HE HAD IN MIND.
2. ON THE MILITARY SITUATION, MACK SAID THAT AT LEAST 12 ROCKET SHELLS HAD HIT U.S. MARINE POSITIONS AROUND THE AIRPORT AT APPROXIMATELY 0100 LOCAL TIME THIS MORNING. THIS HAD BEEN FOLLOWED BY SPORADIC ROCKET AND MORTAR FIRE. TWO MARINES HAD BEEN KILLED. THE FIRE HAD COME FROM A HEAVILY POPULATED AREA, APPARENTLY UNDER DRUZE CONTROL, EAST OF ALEY. COBRA GUNSHIPS FROM IWO JIMA HAD BEEN IN THE AIR BUT HAD NOT ENGAGED TARGETS FOR FEAR OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. MACK SAID THAT IT WAS FAR FROM CLEAR THAT THE MARINES HAD BEEN DELIBERATELY TARGETTED: THE FIRING MAY HAVE BEEN DIRECTED AT THE L A F SUPPLY ROUTE TO KHALDE.
3. MACK SAID THAT BHAMDOWN WAS NOW UNDER DRUZE CONTROLE. THE LEBANESE FORCES HAD WITHDRAWN TAKING WITH THEM A LARGE PROPORTION OF THE CHRISTIAN POPULATION. THERE WERE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF P L O AND SYRIAN INVOLVEMENT.
4. THERE WERE CONFLICTING REPORTS ABOUT THE ALLEGED MASSACRE OF DRUZE AT KAHR MATTA. THE L A F WERE HOLDING HIGH GROUND AROUND THE VILLAGE. THE LEBANESE FORCES SEEMED TO HAVE GOT THE BETTER OF THE FIGHTING. THE AMERICANS WERE SUPPORTING RED CROSS EFFORTS TO DEPLOY MONITORS INTO THE AREA TO ENCOURAGE RESPECT FOR THE CIVILIAN POPULATION. THEY HAD ALSO CONVEYED TO JUMBLATT A L A F ASSURANCE THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY ATTACK ON THE CIVILIAN POPULATION IN KAHR MATTA: JUMBLATT HAD REJECTED THAT ASSURANCE AND CLAIMED THAT THE L A F WERE COOPERATING CLOSELY WITH THE LEBANESE FORCES.

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/5. MACK

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5. MACK SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION BELIEVED THAT THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF THE M N F WAS ESSENTIAL TO HELP THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT PROTECT ITS CAPITAL, TO BROADEN THE BASE OF ITS POLITICAL SUPPORT AND TO RESUME THE PROCESS OF EXPANDING CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTROL OVER THE COUNTRY. THERE WERE NO (NO) PLANS TO CHANGE THE ROLE OR THE SIZE OF THE U.S. CONTINGENT NOR ITS AREA OF DEPLOYMENT. MACK ASSURED US THAT THE AMERICANS WOULD NOT TAKE ANY SUCH ACTION WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH THEIR M N F PARTNERS. THEY WERE CONTINUING TO MONITOR THE SITUATION CLOSELY AND HAD ADDITIONAL FORCES IN POSITION SHOULD THEY BE REQUIRED.

WRIGHT

MIDDLE EAST

STANDARD

NEWAD MAED
MED ESSD
NAD ERD
SAD ESID
UND CONS D
EESD CONS EM UNIT
ECD MR EGERTON
WED MR THOMAS
HID
SEC D CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

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