

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES 76

PS

PS/LADY YOUNG

PS/MR WCE

PS/FUS

~~MR. W. W. W.~~

MR. EBERTON

~~MR. W. W. W.~~ CARTLEDGE

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ED/AED

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CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY FIRST CONTACT WASHINGTON AND UKMIS NEW YORK

FM BEIRUT 121250Z SEP 83

TO FLASH F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 505 OF 12 SEPTEMBER 1983

INFO FLASH ATHENS (FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY)

IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, DAMASCUS, ROME, PARIS,
NICOSIA, MODUK, BRITFORLEB AND CBFC

MY TELNO 502: LEBANON

1. MCFARLANE SAW REPRESENTATIVES OF MNF CONTRIBUTORS AT NOON TODAY (12 SEPTEMBER).
2. HE EXPLAINED THE MODIFICATION TO THE US MARINE COMMANDER'S RULES OF ENGAGEMENT AS IN PARA 2 OF WASHINGTON TELNO 2553 - WHICH I HAD NOT SEEN BEFORE THE MEETING. MCFARLANE SAID THAT THIS DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN FOLLOWING HIS AND THE US GOVERNMENT'S ASSESSMENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON AND THE ARMY, IF SUBJECTED TO CONTINUOUS ATTACKS OF THIS NATURE BY OUTSIDERS, WOULD OVER A TIME LOSE TO SYRIA AND HER SURROGATES UNLESS THEY HAD OUTSIDE HELP. HE HAD SEEN TANNOUS, WHO THOUGHT THAT THE POSITION IN SOUQ AL GHARB COULD BE MAINTAINED IF ATTACKED A THIRD AND POSSIBLY A FOURTH TIME, BUT HE COULD NOT VOUCH FOR THE WALL HOLDING THEREAFTER. THE UNITED STATES' MOVE WAS A SIGNAL TO SYRIA THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WERE NOT WILLING TO ALLOW SYRIA TO UP THE ANTE. I DREW MCFARLANE'S ATTENTION TO THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS (PARA 1(G) OF YOUR TELNO 1479 TO WASHINGTON). MCFARLANE SHARED OUR DOUBTS ABOUT ARAB STAYING POWER, BUT SAID THAT HIS BEST GUESS WAS THAT FOR THE LIMITED CHANGE ENVISAGED SAUDI ARABIA WOULD REMAIN ON BOARD.
3. MCFARLANE THEN ASKED US TO CONSIDER WHETHER MNF CONTRIBUTORS MIGHT AGREE AMONG THEMSELVES THAT IF ATTACKED THEY WOULD ASSIST EACH OTHER IN RESPONDING TO THOSE ATTACKS - IE A SYSTEM OF MUTUAL SUPPORT. HE SAID IT WAS NOT (NOT) HIS INTENTION AT THIS STAGE THAT OTHER CONTRIBUTORS SHOULD ACT AS IN PARA 2 OF WASHINGTON TELNO 2553, ALTHOUGH HE PERSONALLY WOULD WELCOME IT IF WE DID. I SAID THAT YOU WERE CURRENTLY CONSIDERING THE MATTER. HE ACCEPTED THAT IF A SYSTEM OF MUTUAL SUPPORT TO RESPOND TO ATTACKS WERE INSTITUTED, THE SYRIANS MIGHT REGARD OTHER MNF CONTINGENTS AS BEING ASSOCIATED WITH ANY "INITIATIVE" ATTACK BY THE UNITED STATES ON SOUQ AL GHARB. THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HIS PRIME MINISTER HAD ALREADY PROPOSED SOMETHING SIMILAR.

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Handwritten initials

4. MEANWHILE, SAID MCFARLANE, THE INTENSIVE DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT A CEASEFIRE WOULD CONTINUE. THE MAIN STICKING POINT IN NEGOTIATIONS WAS CURRENTLY THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE LEBANESE ARMY IN THE SHOUF. SYRIA WANTED THE ARMY TO WITHDRAW BEFORE A CEASEFIRE AND TO BE REPLACED IN THE WHOLE AREA BY INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES. BANDAR BIN SULTAN WAS RETURNING TO DAMASCUS WITH THREE POSSIBLE COMPROMISE FORMULAE TO GET ROUND THIS PROBLEM. (THESE INCLUDED THE FORMATION OF AN IMMEDIATE COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE HOW THE ARMY MIGHT BE DEPLOYED ON THE BASIS OF CONSENSUS AND A PROPOSAL THAT THE ISSUE BE AVOIDED ALTOGETHER - THERE SHOULD BE A CEASEFIRE IN PLACE WITH NO MOVEMENT OF FORCES UNTIL AFTER RECONCILIATION TALKS HAD GOT GOING.) MCFARLANE DID NOT ASSESS THE CHANCES OF SUCCESS WITH THE SYRIANS AS BEING VERY HIGH. HE HIMSELF PLANNED TO GO TO DAMASCUS, MAYBE THIS AFTERNOON, INTER ALIA TO EXPLAIN THE US GOVERNMENT'S POSITION (SEE PARA 2 ABOVE).

5. ON THE INTERNATIONAL FRONT THE LEBANESE HAVE CIRCULATED AT THE UNITED NATIONS A DRAFT SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION WHICH, INTER ALIA, CALLS FOR AN IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE IN LEBANON AND THE DEPLOYMENT OF UN OBSERVERS IN THE SHOUF TO MONITOR IT. IT HAS HUMANITARIAN RELIEF PROVISIONS AS WELL AS A PROVISION FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN FORCES. MCFARLANE SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES INTENDED TO SUPPORT THAT RESOLUTION.

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