

## MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

August 25, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: BRENT SCOWCROFT  
RON NESSEN

FROM: LES JANKA *for*

SUBJECT: Morning Press Items

1. Comment on Meeting of Korean Armistice Commission:  
Suggested Guidance:

Strongly recommend you defer all comment to the State Department today. If pressed, you should simply point out that the U. S. side used today's meeting to reiterate its demands for punishment of the North Korean guards involved, and a demand for assurances against such further incidents. With regard to the North Korean proposal of further subdividing the Joint Security Area to separate North Korean and United Nation forces, the U. S. side simply undertook to study the proposal.

If asked, about reports of South Korean unhappiness with appearances of a shifting U. S. position towards North Korea, you should point out the State Department spoke to this at length yesterday, indicating that there have been continuous close consultations between the Korean Government and the U. S. Embassy in Seoul, and that you have no specific comment on stories of this nature.

2. Comment on the Lebanese Situation:  
Suggested Guidance:

You should leave all questions to State. The State Department will indicate today that we still have no readout from the two officers that visited the Christian zone. If pressed, you should reiterate the consistent stand of the United States against any partition of Lebanon.

(See Attached Background material).

Morning Press Items (Continued)  
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3. Comment on African Developments:  
Suggested Guidance:

There is no reason for you to comment on today's spate of stories about Namibia-U. S. plans for Rhodesia, and the continued troubles in South Africa. The State Department is prepared to speak to these matters as they did yesterday.

If asked about an Administration initiative on the Byrd Amendment, you should reiterate that the Administration has consistently favored repeal of the Byrd Amendment and the President and Secretary Kissinger have frequently called upon Congress to repeal the amendment, and it now up to the Congress to change the law which puts the United States in violation of its international obligations regarding the sanctions of Rhodesia.

4. Egyptian Hijacking:  
Guidance:

Yesterday's suggested guidance is still good, however, a Presidential message to President Sadat has been sent to Egypt, but has not yet been delivered. We do not plan to release the text. You should not mention this until we have confirmation of delivery of the message.

FOR BACKGROUND

August 24, 1976

FSOs and LEBANON SITUATION

[Background: The two foreign service officers, Houghton and Mack, have left Lebanon and are en route to Cyprus; they will report on their talks in the Christian-held parts of Lebanon via telegrams to Washington. Some press tickers are carrying reports of their departure from Lebanon, and also speculating that the two will go back to Lebanon rather than return to Washington. Comment should be limited to the following:]

Q. Can you confirm that the foreign service officers sent to the Christian held parts of Lebanon have left and are in Cyprus? Will they come back to Washington now or return to Lebanon?

A. They have left Lebanon and should be in Cyprus today. I am not going to comment on plans for their onward travel at this time.

Q. Will they be reporting on their talks from Cyprus?

A. Yes, they will be sending in their reports to Washington.

Q. Can you tell us what the results of their discussions were and with whom they met?

A. I have nothing to give you at this time. We haven't had any reports yet.

Q. What did the mission accomplish? Is there any prospect for a settlement?

A. The dispatch of these officers is part of our on-going effort to be helpful diplomatically but I am not going to get into any discussion of any exchanges.

20 Dec 1978  
August 17, 1978FSOs TO LEBANON

**Q:** Why, after evacuating our Americans because of the security situation and thinning down our Embassy, is the US sending some Foreign Service officers into the Christian-held portions of Lebanon? Is this a new US initiative to solve the Lebanon problem or is it a move to formalize the partition of Lebanon?

**A:** Since the outset of the Lebanese crisis, the US has been rendering diplomatic assistance to help encourage the Lebanese parties towards a peaceful settlement which will preserve Lebanon's independence, national unity and territorial integrity. However, on a practical basis, owing to the security conditions, it has not been possible for our embassy personnel that remain in West Beirut to get in touch with many of the leaders and important personalities on the other side of the confrontation line in East Beirut. It will be recalled that in trying to cross this confrontation line, our diplomats were assassinated.

Therefore, two Foreign Service officers (Robert Houghton and David Mack -- State can provide bio details) with wide experience in Lebanese matters have been sent directly to Lebanon, via Cyprus, on temporary consultations to discuss current developments with key leaders in the Christian-held area and report back to Washington.

The assignment of these officers is part of Embassy Beirut's

overall mission to have contact with the Lebanese parties looking towards a peaceful settlement. It is not a new initiative but part of our on-going effort to be helpful diplomatically.

The assignment of these officers to areas which cannot now be reached by our Embassy personnel absolutely implies no change in our policy and is being undertaken for strictly practical reasons owing to security conditions. US policy remains opposed to the partition of Lebanon or de facto partition as a solution to the Lebanese tragedy. We firmly support Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity, national cohesion and unity.

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When security conditions/allowed it, our Embassy personnel were in regular contact with Lebanese Christian leaders.

So this is not new, it does not imply any special recognition of the geographic area involved or of the individuals who will be contacted.

Q: Why was this not announced in advance? Did the Lebanese Christians ask the US to send these representatives?

A: Obviously, it was not announced in advance for security reasons.

This action is being taken in the context of Embassy Beirut's mission to be in touch with the parties and therefore the question of whether this is being done in response to specific requests does not arise.