

ACTION NEA-00

INFO LOG-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 SRPP-00 VC-00 TEDE-00 INR-00
IO-00 L-00 VCE-00 AC-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OMB-00
PA-00 PM-00 PRS-00 ACE-00 P-00 SP-00 SS-00
TRSE-00 T-00 USIE-00 SA-00 PMB-00 DRL-00 G-00
SAS-00 /000W

-----CCDBA5 081607Z /07

O 081552Z DEC 03

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1252

INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

RELEASED IN PART 1.4(B),1.4(D)

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 007066

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/08/2013

TAGS: PREL, UNGA, IS, LE, SY

SUBJECT: SARG PROTESTS "PROVOCATIVE" US EOY ON GOLAN
RESOLUTION

REF: USUN 3010

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Gene A. Cretz, Reasons 1.5 b/d.

This is an action request; please see para 8.

1. (C) Summary: MFA [] protested to Charge December 8 both the substance and form of the US explanatin of vote (EOV) on the Syrian-sponsored Golan Resolution in the General Assembly delivered on December 3 by public delegate Walid Maalouf. [] complained that US statements on Lebanon in the EOY were inaccurate, as well as inappropriate, given that the subject under discussion was the Golan. Apparently acting on direct instructions from FM Shara, he said that the US choice of a "virulently" anti-Syrian Lebanese American to present the US position, and that he would do so in Arabic, is a "provocative gesture." He warned that "any attempt to interfere with our internal affairs, or in Syrian-Lebanese affairs, is unacceptable," and that bilateral relations would be damaged if the US did not refrain from such provocations in the future. [] urged that US concerns on Lebanon be addressed in private through diplomatic channels with the GOL or the SARG, but not in public, and especially not in multilateral fora such as the General Assembly. End Summary.

1.4(D)
B1

Classification Extended on : 12/31/2012 ~ Class: CONFIDENTIAL ~ Authority: DSCG 11-1 ~ []

-----Declassify on: 12/08/2018

SARG Protests US EOY on Golan Resolution

2. (C) MFA [] convoked Charge on December 8 to protest the EOY delivered by US public delegate Walid Maalouf during General Assembly debate on the Syria-sponsored Golan resolution on

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Sharon Ahmad, Senior Reviewer

December 3. That the US would select a "virulently" anti-Syrian Lebanese American (allegedly) associated with Gen Michel Aoun to present the US position (reftel), that he would do so in Arabic, and that Lebanon would be raised in the context of discussions on the Golan is a "provocative gesture," he said. The SARG could not help but conclude that the US choice of Maalouf was a deliberate attempt to embarrass Syria in the General Assembly.

3. (C) [] said the SARG "refutes totally" the US statements on Syria/Lebanon in the EOv, claiming they reflect neither "on-the-ground" reality or Syrian-Lebanese agreements currently in effect. He said the US comments only serve to advance the interests of parties opposed to the Syrian and Lebanese governments and to encourage Israel to be even more "extreme" in dealing with the Palestinians. If the US has concerns about Lebanon, it should address them via (private) diplomatic channels to the GOL or the SARG as appropriate, but it should not do so publicly. There are many channels for communication, including visits and normal bilateral contacts; there is no need to resort to public displays in the General Assembly. Provocative actions such as the EOv would fail, he said, citing as evidence the Golan resolution's passage with only the US and "three small countries" voting against. Noting that Maalouf had told Mekdad after the EOv that he was acting on instructions, [] refused to believe this was the case.

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4. (C) Indicating that Maalouf had hit a SARG nerve, [] informed that he had been instructed directly from "higher authorities" (read: Foreign Minister Shara) to formally convey Syrian concerns about the US EOv. He said there is no need for "bilateral altercations" between the Syrian and US UN delegations, "unless one side wishes to (downgrade) the dialogue between the two countries." [] regretted the acrimonious exchange between Maalouf and Syrian PermRep Mekdad following the EOv, but warned that "these kinds of altercations will have a negative impact on our bilateral relations...any attempt to interfere with our internal affairs, or in Syrian-Lebanese affairs, is unacceptable." "We urge you to understand better our position and refrain from the kind of provocations that will lead nowhere," he said. "This is not good for you or for us. It will only encourage us to do the same on issues (important to you); then we will fall into a trap. We will don't want to do this, and won't unless we are pushed to do so." Hoping that the US would refrain from "provocative" actions in the future, [] urged that "We should each to our best to understand the other's interests and avoid publicity."

Two-Edged Sword

5. (C) Charge undertook to report [] protest to

Washington and to provide clarification of the US EOV. He agreed with [] that politicization of the UN is not constructive, reminding him that the Embassy had recently

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demarched both him and his deputy on the need to avoid unhelpful politicization of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the General Assembly (Damascus 6828 and 6482). These presentations were aimed at convincing Syria that Arab delegations' attempts to have their grievances with Israel dominate the UN agenda was not helpful to the cause of peace.

6. (C) [] replied testily that if the US is really interested in peace, Israel is the appropriate interlocutor. It is "Sharon's policies," not Syria, that is blocking the peace process, he asserted, adding that the international community has condemned Israel's defiance of "international legitimacy" by ignoring UN Security Council resolutions. Charge observed in this regard that current Syrian policy in Lebanon is not entirely consistent with the several UNSCRs that have been passed on Lebanon.

Comment

7. (C) Only two sentences of Maalouf's EOV were Lebanon-specific: "The impact of Syria in Lebanon is also harmful to Lebanon's prospects for full restoration of its sovereignty. Lebanese sovereignty, Mr. President, is mentioned in numerous past Security Council resolutions." FM Shara's apparent instruction that [] lodge a formal complaint with us is indicative of SARG sensitivities on Lebanon as well as its acute embarrassment when bilateral friction is expressed publicly. We suspect that the Syrian mission's reporting of the "bilateral altercation" was less than fully accurate, particularly the claim that Ma'alouf delivered the EOV in Arabic. We defer to USUN's account of the EOV, but presume that Maalouf conveyed the US position in English, switching to Arabic (if he in fact did so) only during the subsequent, reportedly heated exchange between him and Syrian PermRep Mekdad.

Action Request

8. (SBU) Unless Department or USUN disapproves, Embassy plans to respond to [] protest by conveying the text of Maalouf's EOV by diplomatic note. So that we may set the record straight, Embassy requests USUN's confirmation that Ma'alouf delivered the US EOV in English, not/not Arabic.
CRETZ

ACTION SS-00

RELEASED IN FULL

INFO LOG-00 SAS-00 /000W
-----CE5592 110115Z /38
O 110009Z DEC 03
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8627
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 003091

EXDIS

DEPT FOR NEA AND IO; DAMASCUS FOR CHARGE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/30/2003
TAGS: PREL, UNGA, SY, IS, US
SUBJECT: UNGA/SYRIA - SHOOTING THE MESSENGER

REF: A. USUN 3010
B. DAMASCUS 7066
C. SECTO 00015 (MAY 7
D. 2003)

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR JOHN D. NEGROPONTE. REASON 1.5 (B/D)

1. (C) ON DECEMBER 4, AMBASSADOR NEGROPONTE WROTE THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO SYRIAN PR MEKDAL REGARDING THE U.S. EOV DELIVERED (IN ENGLISH AND AVAILABLE AT WWW.UN.INT/USA) BY PUBLIC DELEGATE MAALOUF ON THE UNGA RESOLUTION ON "THE SYRIAN GOLAN" ON DECEMBER 3.

BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR MR. AMBASSADOR:

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND RECORDS, I WANTED TO CONVEY TO YOU THE OFFICIAL UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT POSITION ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY ITEM 37 WHICH WAS PUT FORWARD IN AN EXPLANATION OF VOTE BY UNITED STATES DELEGATE, MR. WALID MAALOUF, ON DECEMBER 3, 2003.
SINCERELY,

JOHN D. NEGROPONTE

CLOSING

END TEXT.

2. (U) ON DECEMBER 9, SENIOR ADVISER KEISWETTER REITERATED TO AMBASSADOR MEKDAL IN PERSON THAT MR. MAALOUF WAS SPEAKING ON INSTRUCTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE USG -- NOT IN A PERSONAL

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Sharon Ahmad,
Senior Reviewer

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CAPACITY AS MEKDAD ALLEGED IN HIS PUBLIC REMARKS ON DECEMBER 3 (REF A).

3. (C) WE RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENT REJECT THE SARG PROTEST (REF B), WHICH WAS INACCURATE AND APPEARS INTENDED TO SHOOT THE MESSENGER RATHER THAN ADDRESS U.S. CONCERNS ABOUT SYRIAN POLICY. ON SUBSTANCE, THE SECRETARY RAISED THESE SAME CONCERNS -- IN GREATER DETAIL -- ABOUT SYRIAN ACTIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, INCLUDING LEBANON, IN HIS MAY VISITS TO DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT (REF C). ON FORM, "THE SYRIAN GOLAN" RESOLUTION FALLS UNDER THE AGENDA ITEM ENTITLED "THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST." MOREOVER, THE SYRIAN-SPONSORED RESOLUTION THAT WAS ADOPTED INCLUDED AN OPERATIVE REFERENCE TO THE LEBANESE TRACK OF THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS. USUN AND EMBASSY DAMASCUS HAVE DOUBLE-TRACKED OUR RESPONSE BY PROVIDING SYRIAN AUTHORITIES WITH THE FORMAL TEXT OF MR. MAALOUF'S REMARKS, WHICH WERE DRAFTED, DELIVERED AND PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH. NEGROPONTE

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