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FM WASHINGTON 051730Z FEB 82
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 372 OF 5 FEBRUARY
INFO IMMEDIATE BANGKOK (FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY) UKDEL NATO

MY TELNO 365: PRESIDENT REAGAN'S VISIT

1. ANOTHER REEL IN THE STORY: I SAW EAGLEBURGER TODAY, WHO HAD JUST SPOKEN TO HAIG. EAGLEBURGER EXPLAINED THAT THE REASON FOR THE SHIFT BACK TO BRUSSELS AS THE PLACE FOR THE N A T O SUMMIT WAS THE AMERICAN FEAR THAT THEY WERE PUSHING US TOO HARD TO HAVE IT IN LONDON WHEN WE DID NOT REALLY WISH IT TO BE THERE. TO THIS I REPLIED THAT IT WAS TRUE AT THE OUTSET WE HAD HAD SOME HESITATIONS, BUT WE HAD THEN COME TO A CLEAR-CUT DECISION IN FAVOUR OF LONDON AND THIS HAD BEEN COMMUNICATED TO THE AMERICANS.
2. ON THE QUESTION OF A SEPARATE MEETING IN LONDON, EAGLEBURGER SAID THAT ONE OF THE MAIN TROUBLES HAD BEEN THE CONVICTION IN THE WHITE HOUSE THAT THE EUROPEAN VISIT MUST ONLY BE A THREE-STOP AFFAIR, PARIS, BRUSSELS AND ROME. THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF SECURITY CONCERN IN THE WHITE HOUSE, THOUGH VERY MUCH NOT IN THE PRESIDENT'S OWN MIND. BUT THOSE ROUND HIM WERE SCARED STIFF FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT. I GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT THIS MAY UNDERLY THE DETERMINATION NOT TO SPEND A NIGHT IN ROME. HE, EAGLEBURGER, HAD LITTLE SYMPATHY WITH THIS VIEW. THE PRESIDENT COULD NOT SIMPLY SHUT HIMSELF UP IN THE WHITE HOUSE. HE MUST GET UP AND ABOUT AND BE SEEN AROUND THE WORLD. CERTAINLY THERE WAS NO PARTICULAR SECURITY PROBLEM ABOUT LONDON.
3. THEN WE GOT ON TO THE GERMAN PROBLEM. SCHMIDT HAD CONVEYED AN INVITATION NO LESS THAN SIX TIMES TO REAGAN. EAGLEBURGER'S VIEW WAS THAT IF THE PRESIDENT WENT SEPARATELY TO LONDON HE WOULD HAVE TO GO TO GERMANY. THIS LED HIM ON TO ASK WHETHER WE SHOULD NOT RE-OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF THE N A T O SUMMIT IN LONDON.
4. HE ASKED ME THEREFORE WHETHER WE REALLY WERE PREPARED TO HAVE IT IN LONDON. I SAID THAT THERE WAS NO DOUBT ABOUT THIS NOW. WE UNDERSTOOD THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE PROGRAMME, INCLUDING THE GERMAN ISSUE. WE WERE CERTAINLY READY TO HAVE THE N A T O MEETING IN LONDON. TO WHICH EAGLEBURGER SAID THAT HE THOUGHT WE HAD BETTER TRY TO OPEN IT UP AGAIN. HE WOULD TALK TO HAIG AND THE WHITE HOUSE ABOUT IT AND GET BACK TO ME.

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5. I SAID THAT IF, NEVERTHELESS, IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE N A T O SUMMIT SHOULD BE IN BRUSSELS, WE MUST BE CLEAR ABOUT THE NEED FOR A SEPARATE VISIT TO LONDON. I ASKED HIM TO BELIEVE THAT GREAT RESTRAINT HAD BEEN SHOWN IN LONDON WHEN AN INVITATION HAD COME FROM THE QUEEN AND THE PRIME MINISTER SEVERAL MONTHS AGO TO WHICH NO REPLY HAD BEEN GIVEN. WE FULLY COMPREHENDED THE DIFFICULTIES ON THE AMERICAN SIDE BUT I ASKED HIM TO BEAR IN MIND THE SENSIBILITIES ELSEWHERE. EAGLEBURGER SAID THAT HE ENTIRELY AGREED. THE MATTER HAD CERTAINLY BEEN BADLY HANDLED IN WASHINGTON. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY A FEW ASIDES ABOUT AMATEURISHNESS IN THE WHITE HOUSE BUT, MORE IMPORTANT, EAGLEBURGER EMPHASISED HOW MUCH THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF WANTED TO GO TO LONDON. THERE SHOULD BE NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT. EAGLEBURGER ALSO SAID THAT AT THE MOMENT THE GERMANS WERE NOT AMERICA'S FAVOURITE ALLIES.

6. IT WAS LEFT THAT HE WOULD TRY TO SEE HAIG IMMEDIATELY AND SPEAK TO ME AGAIN.

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