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Prime Minister

TO PRIORITY FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE -

TELEGRAM NUMBER 73 OF 17 MAY 1979,

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AND TO PRIORITY MODUK (HEAD DS12),

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, BONN, OSLO, THE HAGUE,

INFO ROUTINE ANKARA, ATHENS, OTTAWA, LISBON, COPENHAGEN, BRUSSELS,

REYKJAVIK, PARIS, ROME, LUXEMBOURG.

no

NATO TNF MODERNISATION.

1. AS THE SECOND ITEM IN THE DPC RESTRICTED SESSION ON 16 MAY (SEE MIPT) BROWN (US) DESCRIBED THE GROWTH IN SOVIET TNF CAPABILITIES AS GOING BEYOND THEIR REASONABLE DEFENSIVE NEEDS. HE OUTLINED THE PROPOSALS BY THE HLG AND SAID THAT THE NPG, AND HE PERSONALLY, ENDORSED THESE IN MILITARY TERMS. THEY WERE BASED ON A MILITARY/POLITICAL ANALYSIS AND LEFT ROOM FOR POLITICAL FLEXIBILITY. THE QUESTION NOW WAS HOW TO REACH DECISIONS. CAREFUL EDUCATION OF PUBLIC OPINION AND GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE CALLED FOR, BOTH ON THE NEED TO DO SOMETHING IN THE FACE OF THE SOVIET THREAT AND ON THE RELATION BETWEEN MODERNISATION AND ARMS CONTROL ASPECTS WHICH THE US RECOGNISED REQUIRED PARALLEL CONSIDERATION. EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO REACH A DECISION BY DECEMBER AND IT SHOULD BE ALLIANCE-WIDE. SENSITIVE ISSUES WOULD BE INVOLVED IN REACHING A DECISION IN THIS TIMESCALE, BUT IT WAS ALSO NECESSARY TO RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF NATO RETAINING CREDIBLE TNF AS PART OF ITS SPECTRUM OF DETERRENCE. ANY GAP IN THE SPECTRUM WAS LIKELY TO BE EXPLOITED BY THE SOVIET UNION, IF NOT MILITARILY, IN AN EFFECTIVE POLITICAL SENSE. NATO MUST THEREFORE BE ABLE TO STRIKE TARGETS IN THE SOVIET UNION WITH IN-THEATRE SYSTEMS. THE US WAS READY TO TAKE THE LEAD ON THIS ISSUE BUT IT COULD NOT PROCEED ALONE.

2. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE UNDERLINED THE NEED TO MODERNISE LONG AND SHORT RANGE TNF SYSTEMS; AND FOR A DECISION THIS YEAR, BROWN AGREED WITH THE POINT MADE BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL THAT WITH WEAPONS LIKE THE SS-20 THE CURRENT CONCEPT OF THEATRE NUCLEAR FORCES WAS A FAR CRY FROM THAT OF BATTLEFIELD WEAPONS; AND THAT THIS CLOSING OF THE GAP BETWEEN TNF AND STRATEGIC SYSTEMS HAD BEEN EXPLOITED BY THE SOVIET UNION.

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3. MR PYM (UK) SUPPORTED BROWN'S STATEMENT. WHETHER OR NOT NATO LIKED IT, MODERNISATION OF ITS TNF WAS EMERGING AS A KEY ISSUE. WHILE EACH COUNTRY MUST HANDLE THE MATTER AS APPROPRIATE TO ITS DOMESTIC CIRCUMSTANCES, HE PLEDGED THE UK'S CLOSE, CONTINUING AND ACTIVE INTEREST. NATO'S ABILITY TO TAKE A DECISION IN 1979 WOULD BE SEEN AS A TEST OF ITS RESOLVE; AND DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES HE HOPED THIS TIME-SCALE WOULD BE MET. HE ENDORSED THE VIEW THAT THE EDUCATION OF PUBLIC OPINION WOULD BE A CRUCIAL FACTOR: HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT PUBLIC OPINION IN ANY OF THE NATO COUNTRIES YET APPRECIATED THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SOVIET BUILD-UP AND THAT IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE LATTER THAT NATO WAS CONSIDERING THE MODERNISATION QUESTION. THE UK WOULD PLAY A FULL PART IN THE PREPARATION OF PUBLIC OPINION.

4. SOGAARD (DENMARK) SAID THAT THE SUBJECT WAS SENSITIVE ESPECIALLY FOR COUNTRIES IN WHICH WEAPONS WHICH COULD REACH SOVIET TERRITORY MIGHT BE BASED. THEY HAD STUDIED THE REPORT OF THE HLG AND WERE FOLLOWING THE PARALLEL WORK OF THE SPECIAL GROUP (SG) WITH CLOSE INTEREST. IN VIEW OF THE DIFFICULT POLITICAL ISSUES INVOLVED, IT WAS MOST IMPORTANT TO EXPLORE WAYS OF INCREASING NATO'S SECURITY THROUGH ARMS CONTROL. DENMARK'S POLICY WAS WELL KNOWN; THEIR DELIBERATIONS WOULD BE INFLUENCED BY THE WORK OF THE HLG AND SG AND THEY CONCURRED STRONGLY IN THE NEED FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH. FINAL DECISIONS MUST AWAIT THE CONCLUSION OF THE WORK OF BOTH GROUPS.

5. APEL (FRG), IN A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION, POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL REASONS FOR MODERNISING NATO'S LONGER RANGE TNF: THE PENETRATION CAPABILITY OF NATO'S EXISTING LONGER RANGE SYSTEMS WAS BECOMING LESS AND THE SS-20 REPRESENTED "A NEW STIP, A QUALITATIVE CHANGE, A NEW THREAT". NATO NEEDED A WEAPON MIX WHICH WOULD PROVIDE SOMETHING OF THE SAME QUALITY. MOREOVER SALT 2 BY ACHIEVING PARITY IN STRATEGIC SYSTEMS WOULD CREATE EVEN MORE IMBALANCE IN THE EURO-STRATEGIC FIELD. THIS HAD LED NATO TO RECOGNISE THE NEED FOR A DECISION ON MODERNISATION WHICH HE THOUGHT WAS REQUIRED THIS YEAR; ALL THE NECESSARY ELEMENTS ON WHICH TO BASE A DECISION SHOULD BE AVAILABLE BY SEPTEMBER. THESE SHOULD BE HARMONISED, AND THE HLG AND SG SHOULD MEET TOGETHER THEN TO PUT THE FINISHING TOUCHES. CLEARLY THE SUBJECT WAS GOING TO RAISE DIFFICULT ISSUES IN PUBLIC BUT THIS POLITICAL DEBATE SHOULD BE STARTED (IT HAD DONE SO IN GERMANY) AS WE COULD BE SURE THAT /OTHERWISE

OTHERWISE THE RUSSIANS WOULD START IT FOR US. IT WOULD BE TOO LATE TO LEAVE THE DEBATE UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT. AN ARMS CONTROL APPROACH WAS NECESSARY NOT JUST FOR PRESENTATIONAL PURPOSES BUT IN ORDER TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE ALLIANCE POLICY OF DEFENCE AND DETENTE. IT WAS RIGHT TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE SS-20 IN THE COMMUNIQUE: IT REPRESENTED A THREAT WHICH IF ALLOWED TO DEVELOP WITHOUT ANY COUNTER ACTION FROM NATO, WOULD BE THE END OF ARMS CONTROL SINCE NATO WOULD NOT BE REGARDED BY THE SOVIET UNION AS A SERIOUS PARTICIPANT IN NEGOTIATIONS IF IT DID NOT DEMONSTRATE A FIRM WILL TO DEFEND ITSELF IF NECESSARY. APEL UNDERLINED THREE FACTORS WHICH WOULD BE IMPORTANT IN REACHING A DECISION. FIRSTLY, WE NEEDED DECISIONS AND ACTION: WE MUST NOT AWAIT POSSIBLE SUCCESS IN ARMS CONTROL. NEXT WHILE HE ACCEPTED THE US VIEW THAT THERE MUST BE A COMMON DECISION ON THE PART OF THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE, THIS COULD NOT REMOVE THE NEED FOR US LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY. LASTLY, IT WOULD BE ESSENTIAL TO TAKE DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS INTO ACCOUNT: THE GERMAN POSITION WAS WELL KNOWN AND SO IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE DECISION TAKEN REPRESENTED A SINGLE ALLIANCE VIEW, TAKING ACCOUNT OF NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES. HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE LAST NPG AND CONFIDENT THAT THE ALLIANCE WOULD STAND THE TEST WHICH THE MODERNISATION DECISION WOULD REPRESENT: CERTAINLY IF THE ALLIANCE COULD NOT TAKE THE DECISION IN GOOD TIME, REFLECTING BOTH MODERNISATION AND ARMS CONTROL ASPECTS, IT WOULD BE IN TROUBLE. FAILURE WOULD HAVE A WIDER IMPACT THAN SIMPLY IN THE FIELD OF TNF. ONLY THOSE WHO WERE STRONG COULD NEGOTIATE AND GUARANTEE PEACE.

6. VANDEN BOYNAENTS (BELGIUM), SPEAKING WITH SOME PASSION, SAID IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO AVOID THE MISTAKES WHICH HAD BEEN MADE OVER THE ERW (ERW) QUESTION: BUT HE WOULD PREDICT THE SAME WOULD HAPPEN OVER TNF MODERNISATION IF THE ALLIANCE WAS NOT CAREFUL. IT WAS ESSENTIAL FOR THE ALLIANCE TO DEVELOP ITS POLITICAL STRATEGY AS A BASIS FOR PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF THE ISSUES. THE MATTER WAS ALREADY IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN. THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT PUBLIC FEARS WOULD EMERGE AND THESE WOULD BE EXPLOITED BY THE RUSSIANS.

7. SCHOLTEN (NETHERLANDS) SAID THAT SALT 2 WOULD HAVE A BEARING ON THE QUESTION OF MODERNISATION AND ARMS CONTROL FOR TNF. HE REITERATED THE POINT HE MADE IN THE EUROGROUP THAT IT WOULD BE DISASTROUS IF A DECISION TO DEPLOY ERW COINCIDED WITH THE EFFORTS TO REACH A DECISION ON TNF MODERNISATION. MOREOVER, IN THE NETHERLANDS VIEW TNF MODERNISATION SHOULD NOT RESULT IN INCREASED ROLES /FOR

FOR NATO'S NUCLEAR FORCES. INDEED THEY CONSIDERED THAT NATO SHOULD STUDY WHETHER THE MODERNISATION OF ITS TNF WOULD NOT ALLOW LESS EMPHASIS TO BE PLACED ON SYSTEMS SUCH AS THOSE OF SHORTER RANGE. ON THE TIMING OF A DECISION, THE NETHERLANDS COULD NOT COMMIT HERSELF TO A FIXED SCHEDULE BUT WOULD ENDEAVOUR TO MEET THE END OF THE YEAR TARGET. HIS GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THAT TNF MODERNISATION WAS NECESSARY BUT THAT IT WOULD BE OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO ACHIEVE AS CONCRETE AS POSSIBLE AN ARMS CONTROL APPROACH. HE AGREED WITH APEL THAT THE HLG AND SG SHOULD MEET TOGETHER.

8. HANSEN (NORWAY) ENDORSED EARLIER REMARKS ON THE NEED FOR A BROAD ALLIANCE CONSENSUS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF A COMPREHENSIVE MODERNISATION/ARMS CONTROL APPROACH. IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO HAVE PROPOSALS FOR PARALLEL ARMS CONTROL MEASURES (PERHAPS TO BE CONSIDERED IN SALT 3) IN ORDER TO AVOID THE CHARGE THAT THE ALLIANCE WAS NOT READY TO NEGOTIATE IN EARNEST ON THESE MATTERS. NORWAY'S LONG STANDING POLICY ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS WOULD STAND; AND IN CONNECTION WITH RECENT PRESS SPECULATION HE WISHED TO SAY THAT THIS WOULD EXCLUDE THE DEPLOYMENT OF NUCLEAR SYSTEMS IN NORWEGIAN NAVAL VESSELS. HE UNDERLINED THAT PUBLIC SENSITIVITIES DIFFERED FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY.

9. FINALLY, IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL AS TO WHETHER THE INCLUSION OF ALCMS IN NATO'S TNF MIX WOULD BE ADVANTAGEOUS POLITICALLY AND WITH PUBLIC OPINION, BROWN SAID THAT ALCMS WOULD APPEAR TO SOME SECTIONS OF PUBLIC OPINION AS THE SMALLEST CHANGE IN NATO'S WEAPON-MIX BUT THEY WERE PERHAPS THE MOST VULNERABLE TO A SOVIET ATTACK. HE WOULD NOT RULE OUT ANY KIND OF CRUISE MISSILE OR BALLISTIC MISSILES; DETAILED TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS WERE NEEDED TO ARRIVE AT THE BEST MIX WHICH MIGHT INVOLVE DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES IN VIEW OF THE DIFFERENT FACTORS FACED BY INDIVIDUAL NATIONS.

10. SEE MIFT FOR REMAINDER OF DISCUSSION.

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