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FM WASHINGTON 162100Z DEC 81

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 3818 OF 16 DECEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE WARSAW MOSCOW BONN UKDEL NATO PARIS UKMIS NEW YORK
UKREP BRUSSELS PRIORITY OTHER NATO POSTS DUBLIN UKDEL VIENNA
UKDEL MADRID

MY TELNO 3798: POLAND.

1. I ASKED STOESSEL THIS MORNING ABOUT THE US ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION AND WHAT THEY PROPOSED TO DO.

2. I MENTIONED THE DISPOSITION BY SOME IN THE EARLY STAGES TO RESERVE JUDGEMENT AND SEEK TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER JARUZELSKI HAD BEEN TAKING ACTION TO FORESTALL SOVIET INTERVENTION. STOESSEL SAID THAT THE AMERICANS DID NOT BUY THAT EXPLANATION AT ALL. THE ACTION TAKEN WAS BEING DRESSED UP TO LOOK NATIONALIST, BUT IT SEEMED OBVIOUS THAT THE REGIME HAD BEEN ACTING UNDER SOVIET PRESSURE. IT REMAINED THE ADMINISTRATION'S VIEW THAT WE SHOULD ALL BE CAUTIOUS IN WHAT WE SAID. THEY DID NOT WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO A WORSENING OF THE SITUATION OR GIVE THE SOVIET UNION A PRETEXT TO SAY THAT THEY HAD DONE SO. THEY ASSESSED THE SITUATION AS DETERIORATING. IT REMAINED TO BE SEEN IF THE POLES WOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT. THERE WERE CONTINUING SIT-INS IN THE GDANSK SHIPYARDS AND AT THE NOVAHUTA STEELWORKS. THE TROOPS SEEMED TO BE USING FORCE SHORT OF THE USE OF FIREARMS TO DEAL WITH STRIKING WORKERS. SOLIDARITY FORCES WERE TRYING TO REORGANISE. THE AMERICANS HAD NO FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT WALESA. IF IT BECAME NECESSARY TO INTENSIFY THE REPRESSION STOESSEL THOUGHT THAT THE AUTHORITIES WOULD RELY ON THE PARA-MILITARY INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE. THE OTHER WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES HAD GENERALLY SUPPORTED THE ACTION TAKEN, THOUGH HUNGARIAN SUPPORT HAD BEEN MORE MUTED THAN THAT OF THE CZECHS AND EAST GERMANS.

3. I EXPLAINED THE DECISION TAKEN BY THE EC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON FOOD AID. THERE CLEARLY COULD BE PHYSICAL DIFFICULTY IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES IN GETTING SUPPLIES INTO POLAND AND DISTRIBUTED. STOESSEL SAID THAT THE AMERICANS FACED SIMILAR PROBLEMS ABOUT THE DOLLARS 30 MILLION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE BEING HANDLED THROUGH THE CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICE AND CARE. SOME SHIPS WERE STILL GOING INTO POLISH PORTS BUT IT WAS NOT CLEAR IF THEY WERE OFFLOADING. THE AMERICANS WERE HOLDING IN ABEYANCE ANY FURTHER AID.

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4. STOESSEL ADDED THAT NITZE HAD HELD A FURTHER MEETING WITH KVITSINSKY YESTERDAY. HE HAD MADE A BRIEF STATEMENT REGISTERING US CONCERN ABOUT POLAND AND THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO OUTSIDE INTERVENTION. KVITSINSKY HAD REPLIED SHARPLY THAT THIS WAS A POLISH AFFAIR AND THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO LINKAGE WITH THE ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS.

5. EAGLEBURGER IS SEEING THE POLISH AMBASSADOR THIS MORNING TO GIVE HIM A NOTIFICATION RESTRICTING THE MOVEMENTS OF HIS EMBASSY PERSONNEL TO THE CITY OF WASHINGTON IN RETALIATION FOR THE RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON US PERSONNEL IN POLAND. THIS WILL BE ANNOUNCED, AS WILL THE FACT THAT EAGLEBURGER WILL BE ASKING FOR ASSURANCES ABOUT WALESIA AND THE SOLIDARITY PERSONNEL WHO HAVE BEEN ARRESTED.

6. STOESSEL ADDED THAT THERE WERE PLENTY OF PEOPLE HERE WHO WOULD LIKE TO SHOOT OFF ABOUT THE SITUATION. HAIG SAW IT AS VERY GRAVE BUT WANTED A MEASURED US RESPONSE. HE DID NOT WANT TO GET TOO FAR OUT IN FRONT OF THE ALLIES. THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE GIVING A PRESS CONFERENCE TOMORROW, WHICH HAD BEEN SCHEDULED FOR SOME TIME, AT WHICH HE WOULD HAVE TO GO FURTHER THAN THE ADMINISTRATION HAD SO FAR DONE IN CONDEMNING THE ACTION WHICH HAD BEEN TAKEN BY THE POLISH AUTHORITIES. HE WOULD REFER TO THE STRIKES, THE REPORTS OF THE USE OF FORCE, THE SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONCERN ABOUT SOLIDARITY AND THE SUPPRESSION OF REFORMS. STOESSEL SAID, IN PARENTHESIS, THAT IT SEEMED CLEAR THAT THE ASSURANCES THAT THERE WOULD BE NO RETURN TO THE SITUATION BEFORE AUGUST 1980 WERE WORTHLESS.

7. I SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS BOUND TO BE ASKED WHETHER HE THOUGHT THE SOVIET UNION HAD BEEN INVOLVED. STOESSEL SAID HE THOUGHT THAT IT WAS LIKELY THAT HE WOULD TAKE THE LINE THAT THE SOVIET PRESENCE WAS SO PERVASIVE THAT ACTION COULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN TAKEN WITHOUT SOVIET KNOWLEDGE. STOESSEL ADDED THAT THE US DID NOT AT THIS STAGE ENVISAGE ACTION AT THE UN.

8. STOESSEL SAID THAT WE SHOULD ALL NEED TO REFLECT VERY CAREFULLY ON THE QUESTION OF FOOD AID. I ASKED WHETHER THE AMERICANS SAW ANY WAY OF GETTING FOOD TO THE POPULATION WITHOUT ITS BEING USED AS AN INSTRUMENT OF THE REGIME. STOESSEL SAID THAT THE AMERICANS HAD BEEN LOOKING AT THE POSSIBILITY OF TRYING TO USE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS, CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS OR THE CHURCH. BUT IT WAS IN PRACTICE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO DISTRIBUTE LARGE QUANTITIES OF FOOD AID EXCEPT THROUGH THE AUTHORITIES, WHO COULD TRY TO USE IT TO ASSIST REPRESSION.

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9. STOESEL CONFIRMED THAT THE AMERICANS HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF SOVIET TROOP MOVEMENTS. BUT THEY CONSIDER THE STATE OF SOVIET READINESS SUFFICIENTLY HIGH TO ENABLE THEM TO MOVE QUICKLY IF NEED BE. THE AMERICANS HAVE NOT BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS SINCE STOESEL SAW BESSMERTNYKH HERE ON SUNDAY TO WARN THEM AGAINST INTERVENTION.

10. COMMENT.

THE AMERICANS ARE CONVINCED THAT THE POLISH AUTHORITIES ARE ENGAGED IN SYSTEMATIC REPRESSION. (FOR ONE NORMALLY SO GUARDED IN HIS UTTERANCES, STOESEL WAS STRIKINGLY CATEGORIC). THE QUESTION IS WHETHER THE POLISH AUTHORITIES WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THE SUPPRESSION OF SOLIDARITY ON THEIR OWN OR WHETHER THEY WILL NEED SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO DO SO, (WITH REFERENCE TO PARA 1 OF YOUR TELNO 78 TO UKDEL MADRID, THE AMERICAN VIEW WOULD BE THAT EVENTS IN POLAND HAVE ALREADY TAKEN A DRAMATIC TURN). THEY ARE CONCERNED TO MARCH IN STEP WITH THE ALLIES. THEY CONSIDER THAT ANY APPEARANCE OF DISUNITY WOULD HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR POLAND AND THE ALLIANCE. THEY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE GERMAN REACTIONS. STOESEL SAID THAT GERMAN PRESS COMMENT HAD BEEN QUOTE FEEBLE UNQUOTE, WITH SOME LEADING NEWSPAPERS SUGGESTING THAT THE POLES WERE HANDLING THE PROBLEM THEMSELVES. THE ADMINISTRATION IS NOW UNDER PRESSURE HERE (RESTON TODAY, KRAFT YESTERDAY) TO MAKE ITS OWN POSITION CLEARER ON THE EVENTS THAT HAVE BEEN TAKING PLACE.

11. THERE WILL BE A FURTHER MEETING WITH STOESEL TOMORROW.

HENDERSON

[REPETITION TO REYKJAVIK REFERRED FOR DEPARTMENTAL DECISION, REPEATED AS REQUESTED TO OTHER POSTS]

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