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Cub Deployment*

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DWF F 005/21

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OO FCO (DESKBY 211400Z )

PP WASHINGTON

PP BONN

PP PARIS

PP UKDEL NATO

GRS 1085

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY 211400Z

FM MOSCOW 211307Z JAN 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 70 OF 21 JAN

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, BONN, PARIS, UKDEL NATO

SOVIET VIEWS ON I.N.F.

SUMMARY

1. INF WAS DISCUSSED DURING THE UK/SOVIET PLANNING TALKS ON 20 JANUARY. THE RUSSIANS GAVE A CAREFULLY PRESENTED STATEMENT OF THEIR POSITION, QUESTIONING THE LOGIC OF THE NON-INCLUSION OF BRITISH AND FRENCH SYSTEMS. THEY ALLEGED THAT THE BRITISH AND FRENCH WERE HELPING THE AMERICANS TO BLOCK THE GENEVA TALKS; CHALLENGED THE INDEPENDENCE OF OUR NUCLEAR DETERRENT ON THE GROUND OF COORDINATED TARGETTING OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN WEAPONS; AND AT ONE POINT SEEMED TO SUGGEST THAT THE UK AND FRANCE JOIN THE GENEVA TALKS ALTHOUGH THEY REPEATEDLY STRESSED THAT THEY RECOGNISED OUR POSITION AS NON-PARTICIPANTS.

DETAIL

2. BELONOGOV (DEPUTY HEAD OF THE MFA'S PLANNING ADMINISTRATION)

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ACAD  
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IMMEDIATE

ADVANCE COPY

PS  
PS/M'Hard  
~~PS/PUS~~  
M' Wright

M' Gullmore

N° 10 D. Str.  
i.e. George Walden.

2. BELONOGOV (DEPUTY HEAD OF THE MFA'S PLANNING ADMINISTRATION) ARGUED THAT IT WAS THE US AND NOT THE SOVIET UNION WHICH WAS IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE ARMS RACE. NEW AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY WAS MAKING AGREEMENTS DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE. CRUISE MISSILES, WHICH COULD REACH TARGETS UNDETECTED, THE STEALTH BOMBER, AND THE DEPLOYMENT OF NEW NUCLEAR WEAPONS CLOSER TO SOVIET TERRITORY LED THE SOVIET UNION TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE US WAS DEVELOPING A FIRST STRIKE CAPABILITY AND WAS SEEKING MILITARY SUPERIORITY.

3. TURNING TO INF, BELONOGOV READ CAREFULLY FROM A PREPARED STATEMENT. AMERICAN NUCLEAR SYSTEMS IN EUROPE WERE THE MAIN ISSUE IN THE COMPLEX OF EUROPEAN PROBLEMS. THE SOVIET UNION SOUGHT A JUST AGREEMENT. BUT THE US WAS NOT WILLING TO REACH A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT. THE SOVIET UNION DID NOT SHARE THE OPTIMISM PROCLAIMED BY WASHINGTON TO PLACATE WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION. EARLIER SOVIET PROPOSALS HAD BEEN IGNORED IN WASHINGTON. ANDROPOV'S LATEST PROPOSAL WAS ALSO BEING REJECTED. BUT THIS PROPOSAL WOULD BE IN THE INTEREST OF ALL STATES, ABOVE ALL THE EUROPEAN NUCLEAR STATES (IE UK AND FRANCE). THE SOVIET UNION WAS NOT DEMANDING THAT THE DESTINY OF UK AND FRENCH SYSTEMS BE DECIDED IN THE TALKS. BUT THEY COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE LOGIC OF THE BRITISH AND FRENCH POSITION. ON THE ONE HAND LONDON, BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, SEEMED TO FAVOUR PROGRESS IN THE GENEVA TALKS. ON THE OTHER ITS OFFICIAL POSITION WAS THAT BRITISH NUCLEAR FORCES SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. THESE FORCES REPRESENTED A FORMIDABLE REALITY WHICH THE SOVIET UNION COULD NOT IGNORE. THE US DELEGATION IN GENEVA PRETENDED TO IGNORE THEIR EXISTENCE, AND THEREBY CREATED DEADLOCK IN THE TALKS. THE EUROPEAN NUCLEAR POWERS WERE HELPING WASHINGTON TO DO THIS. IF WE WERE INTERESTED IN DEPLOYMENT RATHER THAN RESULTS IN GENEVA, OUR POSITION MADE SENSE. TO SUPPORT THE ZERO OPTION MEANT TO FAVOUR DEPLOYMENT.

4. BRITISH AND FRENCH FORCES WERE FAR FROM INSIGNIFICANT.

ONE NUCLEAR ARMED SUBMARINE HAD THE DESTRUCTIVE CAPACITY OF ALL THE EXPLOSIVES USED IN WORLD WAR II. THE UK AND FRANCE HAD MORE THAN ONE SUBMARINE. THEY ALSO HAD PLANS FOR A CONSIDERABLE BUILD-UP OF WARHEADS: BRITAIN PLANNED AN INCREASE TO BETWEEN 500 AND MORE THAN 900 DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF MIRV-ING. 200 OR 500 OR 900 AIMED AT THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS ALLIES COULD NOT BE IGNORED. IF THE SOVIET UNION WERE TO GIVE TWO ALLIES SOME OF ITS NUCLEAR WEAPONS, AND TO DEMAND THAT THEY NOT BE COUNTED, THE WEST WOULD PROTEST. WHETHER WE INTENDED, WE WERE EFFECTIVELY HELPING THE US TO BLOCK THE TALKS.

5. WALDEN REJECTED THIS ASSERTION AND DEPLOYED OUR ARGUMENTS FOR NON-INCLUSION. IT WAS THE SOVIET POSITION WHICH LACKED BOTH LOGIC AND CONSISTENCY. THE INF NEGOTIATIONS WERE BILATERAL: THE RUSSIANS SEEMED TO WANT TO MATCH EVERYONE ELSE PUT TOGETHER: AND THEY THEMSELVES HAD DESCRIBED OUR DETERRENT AS STRATEGIC IN SALT I. MOREOVER GROMYKO, IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE IN BONN, NOW SEEMED TO WANT TO HAVE IT BOTH WAYS. THE UK DETERRENT WAS AN INDEPENDENT, MINIMUM, ULTIMATE STRATEGIC DETERRENT. COMMON SENSE AND STATISTICS SHOWED THAT IT WAS OF MARGINAL SIGNIFICANCE TO ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS: IT WAS LESS THAN 2.5% OF TOTAL SOVIET STRATEGIC SYSTEMS.

6. BELONOGOV WAS CLEARLY PREPARED TO COUNTER THESE ARGUMENTS:

(A) INF AS BILATERAL US/SOVIET TALKS: THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF DISCUSSING THE SIZE, TYPE AND MODERNISATION OF BRITISH AND FRENCH SYSTEMS. THAT WAS A SOVEREIGN DECISION FOR THOSE COUNTRIES. BUT THEY HAD TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN ANY CEILINGS.

(B) THE SOVIET UNION WANTED AS MANY WEAPONS AS EVERYONE ELSE PUT TOGETHER: WE SEEMED TO BE CASTING DOUBT ON WHETHER THE SOVIET UNION SHOULD HAVE A COUNTERBALANCE TO UK AS WELL AS US FORCES. THEY COULD NOT OVERLOOK FORCES AIMED AT THEM WHEN COUNTING THE ABSOLUTE LEVEL OF THEIR ARMED FORCES. THIS VIEW WAS RECOGNISED ABROAD AND INDEED BY UK OPINION. (BELONOGOV READ FROM A CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR EDITORIAL IN FAVOUR OF ACCOUNT BEING TAKEN OF BRITISH AND FRENCH SYSTEMS).

IF THE UK AND FRANCE WANTED TO TAKE PART IN THE INF TALKS NO-ONE WOULD OBJECT. THE USSR HAD PROPOSED AND STILL FAVOURED NEGOTIATIONS ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT INVOLVING ALL NUCLEAR POWERS.

(C) THE STRATEGIC NATURE OF BRITISH FORCES: THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN STRATEGIC AND NON-STRATEGIC WAS VAGUE, RELATIVE AND NOT THE POINT. FOR THE SOVIET UNION ANY WEAPONS WHICH COULD REACH ANYWHERE WHERE SOVIET STRATEGIC FORCES WERE DEPLOYED WAS STRATEGIC. BRITISH AND FRENCH FORCES WERE STRATEGIC IN THIS SENSE. THE SOVIET UNION HAD TO HAVE A COUNTERWEIGHT. IT WAS FOR THEM TO DECIDE THE TYPE - MEDIUM RANGE WEAPONS OR ICBMS - JUST AS THE UK HAD DECIDED TO HAVE SUBMARINES RATHER THAN LAND BASED MISSILES.

(D) INDEPENDENCE OF BRITISH SYSTEMS: THE SOVIET UNION TOOK ACCOUNT OF THEIR INDEPENDENT NATURE. BUT THE SINGLE SYSTEM OF TARGETTING OF US AND BRITISH FORCES CAST DOUBT ON THEIR INDEPENDENCE. THE SOVIET UNION WOULD NATURALLY PREFER THAT SUCH COORDINATION DID NOT EXIST. THEY WOULD THEN HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE

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COORDINATION DID NOT EXIST. THEY WOULD THEN HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE  
THAT BRITISH MISSILES WOULD NOT BE LAUNCHED AUTOMATICALLY AT THE  
SAME TIME AS AMERICAN.

7. WALDEN SAID THAT THERE WAS CLEARLY A BASIC DISAGREEMENT HERE  
BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS, WHICH GILLMORE'S VISIT AT THE  
BEGINNING WOULD HELP TO CLARIFY. BUT OUR POSITION WAS BOTH FIRM  
AND LOGICAL.

SUTHERLAND

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*Handwritten:* [Faint, illegible markings]