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FM FCO 201530Z OF 20 SEPT 83

TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1536 OF 20 SEPTEMBER

INFO PRIORITY NATO POSTS, UKREP BRUSSELS (FOR PS), MOSCOW  
AND TOKYO

INF : MODIFIED US POSITION

SUMMARY

1. A SPECIAL RESTRICTED MEETING OF THE SCG IN BRUSSELS ON 19 SEPTEMBER GAVE BROAD ENDORSEMENT (ALTHOUGH GREECE REMAINED SILENT) TO US PROPOSALS FOR FILLING OUT THE US NEGOTIATING POSITION ON INF. THE MODIFIED US POSITION, COMMUNICATED TO NATO HEADS OF GOVERNMENT (AND TO THE JAPANESE PM) IN MESSAGES FROM PRESIDENT REAGAN PRIOR TO THE MEETING, WILL BE TABLED IN GENEVA ON 22 SEPTEMBER AND PUBLICLY UNVEILED BY THE PRESIDENT IN HIS SPEECH TO THE UNGA ON 26 SEPTEMBER. THE US WILL EXPRESS ITS READINESS TO:-

(I) AGREE, IN THE CONTEXT OF AN AGREEMENT ON OVERALL INF REDUCTIONS, TO PROPORTIONATE REDUCTIONS IN PERSHING 2S AS WELL AS GLCMS. .

(II) CONSIDER, IN THE CONTEXT OF AGREEMENT ON EQUAL GLOBAL LIMITS ON LRINF MISSILES, A US COMMITMENT NOT TO MATCH IN EUROPE THE TOTAL SOVIET GLOBAL LRINF DEPLOYMENT (WHILE RETAINING THE RIGHT TO DEPLOY THE BALANCE ELSEWHERE).

(III) EXPLORE LIMITS ON LRINF AIRCRAFT.

DETAIL

2. THE SCG DISCUSSED BOTH THE SUBSTANCE OF THE US PROPOSALS AND THEIR PUBLIC HANDLING.

3. ON BEGIN UNDERLINING SUBSTANCE CEASE UNDERLINING, BURT (US CHAIRMAN) EXPLAINED THAT THE US OBJECTIVE WAS TO SHOW SENSITIVITY TO SOVIET PREOCCUPATIONS AND TO WESTERN PUBLIC CONCERNS WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE

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ALLIANCE POSITION AGREED IN 1979. THE NEW PROPOSALS WOULD FIRST BE PRESENTED BY AMBASSADOR NITZE ON 22 SEPTEMBER AS GENERAL PROPOSITIONS, LEAVING DETAILS UNDER EAC HEAD TO BE SPELLEDOOUT SUBSEQUENTLY AND AFTER FURTHER ALLIANCE CONSULTATION WITHIN THE SCG. BURT EXPLAINED THE RATIONALE OF THE US MOVE ON THE FOLLOWING LINES:-

(I) BEGIN UNDERLINING WEAPONS MIX CEASE UNDERLINING. US WILLINGNESS TO GIVE AN ASSURANCE OF PROPORTIONATE REDUCTION OF PERSHING 2S IN ANY OVERALL REDUCTIONS AGREEMENT WAS INTENDED TO RESPOND TO SOVIET CONCERN THAT THE P2 REPRESENTS A PARTICULARLY SERIOUS THREAT TO ITS SECURITY SEMI-COLON AND TO PUBLIC CONCERN IN THE FRG THAT REDUCTIONS MIGHT BE CONFINED TO GLCMS. (RUTH, FOR THE FRG, EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE PROPORTION OF P2S RELATIVE TO GLCMS AFTER REDUCTIONS WOULD NOT BE GREATER THAN THAT ENVISAGED IN THE 1979 DECISION.)

(II) BEGIN UNDERLINING DE FACTO LIMITATIONS ON US INF DEPLOYMENTS IN EUROPE CEASE UNDERLINING. THE US WISHED, WHILE ADHERING TO THE PRINCIPLE OF GLOBAL LIMITS, TO SHOW READINESS TO MEET SOVIET CONCERNS THAT SOME SOVIET INF DEPLOYMENTS WOULD BE OUT OF RANGE OF EUROPEAN TARGETS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE AMERICANS ARE RELUCTANT TO BE DRAWN TOWARDS COMMITMENT TO QUANTIFIED REGIONAL SUB-CEILINGS OR TOWARDS CONCEPTS OF REGIONAL STRATEGIC BALANCE (WHICH COULD BE APPLIED UNHELPFULLY TO REGIONS OTHER THAN EUROPE): CONSEQUENTLY, THEIR AIM IS TO PUT THE ONUS ON THE RUSSIANS (ONCE THEY HAVE ACCEPTED PRINCIPLE OF GLOBAL LIMITS) TO DECIDE HOW MUCH OF THEIR INF QUOTA THEY WISH TO DEPLOY IN ASIA, UNDERTAKING SIMPLY TO COUNTERBALANCE SOVIET DEPLOYMENTS TARGETED ON EUROPE. THE US WOULD OF COURSE RETAIN THE RIGHT TO DEPLOY THE BALANCE OF ITS GLOBAL QUOTA ELSEWHERE, EG IN THE US ITSELF.

(III) BEGIN UNDERLINING AIRCRAFT CEASE UNDERLINING. THE OFFER TO DISCUSS LIMITS ON LRINF AIRCRAFT RESPONDS TO THE SOVIET WISH TO INCLUDE THESE IN THE NEGOTIATION (ALTHOUGH THE SOVIET UNION DISPOSES OF MANY MORE NUCLEAR CAPABLE AIRCRAFT THAN THE US). NITZE WOULD NOT BE AUTHORISED TO DISCUSS AIRCRAFT TYPES OR NUMBERS AT THIS STAGE. (WE REITERATED THE UK'S CONCERN THAT

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DISCUSSION OF AIRCRAFT SHOULD BE USED TO ESTABLISH THE PRINCIPLE OF GLOBALITY AND THUS STRENGTHEN ITS APPLICATION TO MISSILES: BURT TOOK THE POINT, BUT INDICATED DIFFERENCES OF VIEW IN WASHINGTON ON THE ISSUE. THE FRG EXPRESSED, WITHOUT EXPLAINING, A PREFERENCE FOR REGIONAL RATHER THAN GLOBAL LIMITS ON AIRCRAFT.)

4. BURT EMPHASISED THAT, PARTICULARLY AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF CURRENT US POLITICAL CLIMATE ON EAST/WEST ISSUES, PRESIDENT REAGAN'S PROPOSALS ARE A SIGNIFICANT DEMONSTRATION OF GENUINE FLEXIBILITY OF THE US APPROACH TO THE INF NEGOTIATION. THE US WOULD NOT WISH TO DEVELOP THE WHOLE OF ITS NEGOTIATING POSITION BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR, SINCE TO DO SO MIGHT STRENGTHEN THE ARGUMENTS FOR DEFERRING DEPLOYMENT. THERE WAS GENERAL SUPPORT WITHIN THE GROUP FOR THE US PROPOSALS AND APPROACH, ALTHOUGH THE DANE DOUBTED WHETHER THEY WENT FAR ENOUGH TO SATISFY PUBLIC OPINION IN DENMARK AND THE GREEK HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS..

5. ON BEGIN UNDERLINING PUBLIC HANDLING CEASE UNDERLINING, BURT SAID THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN'S SPEECH AT THE UNGA ON 26 SEPTEMBER WOULD HAVE A STRONG ARMS CONTROL EMPHASIS AND WOULD DISCLOSE THE NEW US POSITION ON INF IN TERMS SIMILAR TO THOSE IN HIS MESSAGES TO HEADS OF GOVERNMENT. THE US HOPED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH WOULD EVOKE PROMPT AND EMPHATIC STATEMENTS OF ENDORSEMENT AND SUPPORT IN ALLIED CAPITALS, STRESSING THE INTENSITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ALLIED CONSULTATION ON THE INF ISSUE. THERE WAS SOME PRESSURE, PARTICULARLY FROM THE FRG AND SCANDINAVIANS, FOR AN INTERIM ANNOUNCEMENT BEFORE 26 SEPTEMBER OF ALLIANCE AGREEMENT ON A NEW NEGOTIATING POSITION: THE UK ARGUED AGAINST ANY MOVE WHICH WOULD REDUCE THE IMPACT OF THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH OR EVOKE A PRE-EMPTIVE SOVIET STATEMENT, WHILE BURT INDICATED THAT A PUBLIC STATEMENT BEFORE 26 SEPTEMBER WAS UNLIKELY TO FIND FAVOUR IN WASHINGTON.

AN SCG'S CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT WOULD BE ISSUED ON 26 SEPTEMBER, SIMULTANEOUSLY IN BRUSSELS AND WASHINGTON SEMI-COLON AND IT WAS HOPED THAT A DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE BY THE NAC ON 28 SEPTEMBER WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY AN APPROPRIATE PRESS RELEASE.

6. THERE WAS GENERAL RECOGNITION IN THE GROUP THAT THE NEW

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ELEMENT IN THE US POSITION SUMMARIZED IN PARA 3(II) ABOVE  
WOULD REQUIRE PARTICULARLY CAREFUL PUBLIC HANDLING AND IT WAS  
AGREED THAT THE SCG SHOULD PURSUE THIS AT ITS NEXT MEETING  
(IN BONN) ON 7 OCTOBER.

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