

Subject on Defense: INF
#4

DEDIP SECRET

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OO WASHINGTON
GRS 460
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DESKBY 101400Z
FM FCO 101100Z OCT 83
TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1670 OF 10 OCTOBER

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T 148/83

1. PLEASE DELIVER THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO PRESIDENT REAGAN, THE BACKGROUND TO WHICH YOU WILL BE AWARE OF FROM TELECON WESTON/RENWICK ON THE SECURE LINE ON 7 OCTOBER.

BEGINS

DEAR RON,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MESSAGE OF 6 OCTOBER ABOUT THE ARRIVAL OF CRUISEMISSILES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM. I ABSOLUTELY AGREE ON THE NEED NOT TO JEOPARDISE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATO'S DECISION AND TO HELP THE GERMANS BY DEMONSTRATING FIRMNESS OF PURPOSE AT THIS DIFFICULT MOMENT. AT THE SAME TIME THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT ABOUT THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM WHICH HELMUT KOHL FACES: AND THIS WAS WHY MICHAEL HESELTINE, AS HE EXPLAINED TO GEORGE SHULTZ AND CAP WEINBERGER IN SEPTEMBER, WAS VERY ANXIOUS THAT THE GERMANS SHOULD BE FULLY AWARE OF THE PROPOSED TIMETABLE FOR DELIVERIES HERE.

IN RESPONSE TO A SUGGESTION FROM THE GERMANS THAT WE MIGHT CONSIDER SOME ADJUSTMENT IN THE TIMETABLE TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE POST

BUNDESTAG DEBATE ON 21 NOVEMBER, I HAVE TODAY WRITTEN TO HELMUT KOHL. I HAVE TOLD HIM THAT I HAVE HAD A MESSAGE FROM YOU: AND I HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT WE BOTH RECOGNISE HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR THE WHOLE ALLIANCE THAT THE BUNDESTAG DEBATE SHOULD GO WELL. BUT I HAVE LEFT HIM IN NO DOUBT ABOUT THE DANGERS OF MAKING ANY CHANGE TO THE TIMETABLE - PARTICULARLY BECAUSE OF THE IMPRESSION WHICH THIS COULD CREATE THAT OUR RESOLUTION WAS BEGINNING TO FALTER. I HAVE POINTED OUT TO HIM THAT THIS COULD NOT ONLY STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF OUR CRITICS AT HOME BUT

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COULD ALSO TEMPT THE RUSSIANS TO THINK THAT, BY SOME PROPAGANDA MOVE, THEY COULD MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR ALL OF US TO ACHIEVE DEPLOYMENT BY THE AGREED DATE OF 31 DECEMBER. I HAVE EXPLAINED THAT AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF US ALL, INCLUDING THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, TO STICK TO THE EXISTING TIMETABLE.

I HAVE, HOWEVER, THOUGHT IT RIGHT TO ADD THAT, IF HE STILL FELT THAT THIS COURSE WOULD CREATE INSUPERABLE POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES FOR HIM, HE WOULD NO DOUBT WANT TO CONSIDER EXPLAINING THE PROBLEM TO YOU. WE COULD THEN ALL LOOK AT THE QUESTION AGAIN TOGETHER. BUT I HAVE STRESSED THAT THE BULK OF THE EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING THE LAUNCHERS, MUST ARRIVE HERE AT THE BEGINNING OF NOVEMBER: AND THAT, EVEN IF THE DELIVERY OF THE MISSILES AND WARHEADS THEMSELVES DID NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL 22 NOVEMBER (WHICH WOULD BE THE VERY MOST WHICH WE HERE COULD CONSIDER, WHATEVER THE OUTCOME OF THE BUNDES-TAG DEBATE), SUCH AN ADJUSTMENT WOULD BE OPERATIONALLY VERY DIFFICULT FOR YOU. IN CONCLUSION I HAVE STRESSED MY HOPE THAT HE WILL ON REFLECTION AGREE THAT THE RIGHT COURSE IS TO MAKE NO FURTHER CHANGE AND FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM TO STICK TO THE EXISTING TIMETABLE.

WITH BEST WISHES
YOURS EVER
MARGARET THATCHER
ENDS
HOWE

LIMITED
HD/ DEFENCE D
PS
PS/MR LUCE
PS/PUS
SIR J BULLARD
MR WRIGHT
MR CARTLEDGE
MR JAMES

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