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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 2599 OF 14 SEPTEMBER

INFO PRIORITY: MOSCOW, BONN, PARIS, UKDEL NATO

MY TELNO 2598 (NOT TO ALL):

MR HESELTINE'S MEETING WITH SHULTZ

1. AFTER REFERRING TO SOVIET SUPPORT FOR SYRIAN ACTIONS IN THE LEBANON, AND ARMS SUPPLIES TO CENTRAL AMERICA, SHULTZ SAID THAT HE THOUGHT WE WERE DEALING WITH A PRETTY COLD REGIME IN MOSCOW. HE COULD SEE NO EVIDENCE OF THE POST-BREZHNEV REGIME BEING MORE READY TO TRY TO GET ALONG WITH THE WEST. WE MUST NEGOTIATE IN GOOD FAITH ON ARMS CONTROL AND WERE DOING SO. BUT HE WAS NOT PARTICULARLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS.

2. IN REPLY TO MR HESELTINE'S QUESTION, SHULTZ SAID THAT AT BREZHNEV'S FUNERAL, ANDROPOV HAD IMPRESSED HIM AS A HIGHLY INTELLIGENT AND FORMIDABLE PERSONALITY. AS THE US AMBASSADOR HAD OBSERVED, HE HAD THE AIR OF A MAN WHO HAD BEEN IN CHARGE FOR SOME TIME, IE PRESUMABLY BEFORE BREZHNEV DIED. HIS BACKGROUND WAS FAIRLY CHILLING. BUT HE WAS ALSO GOING TO HAVE TO GRAPPLE WITH SOME VERY TOUGH PROBLEMS. THAT WAS ABOUT THE BEST REASON TO HOPE FOR SOME EFFORT TOWARDS ACCOMMODATION. THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAD NEVER HAD ANY ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE SOVIET SYSTEM. THE KOREAN AIRLINER INCIDENT HAD BEEN A REMINDER TO OTHERS.

3. MR HESELTINE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT THE US ADMINISTRATION HAD HANDLED WELL ITS RESPONSE TO THAT INCIDENT, WHICH SURELY MUST

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3. ~~MR HESELTINE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT THE US ADMINISTRATION HAD HANDED WELL ITS RESPONSE TO THAT INCIDENT,~~ WHICH SURELY MUST HAVE BEEN AN EMBARRASSMENT TO THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP. SHULTZ AGREED THAT THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A 'MISTAKE': THE SYSTEM WAS CLUMSY, AS THEY HAD SHOWN IN THEIR HANDLING OF THE AFFAIR.

4. MR HESELTINE ASKED IF SHULTZ SAW ANY HOPE OF PROGRESS IN THE INF NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. SHULTZ SAID THAT NOTHING GROMYKO HAD SAID TO HIM IN MADRID HAD BEEN AT ALL ENCOURAGING. NOR HAD ANYTHING KVITSINSKY HAD SAID TO NITZE. GENSCHER HAD THOUGHT THAT HE HAD SEEN A CHINK OF LIGHT IN GROMYKO'S REFERENCE TO BRITISH AND FRENCH SYSTEMS; THAT NOW SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN CLOSED OFF BY KORNIEENKO (MOSCOW TELNO 1021 TO YOU). WHEN NITZE HAD SOUGHT TO EXPLORE WHAT THE RUSSIANS MEANT BY THE 'LIQUIDATION' OF SOME SS20S, KVITSINSKY HAD SAID THAT THIS REFERRED TO THE TRANSPORTERS, NOT TO THE MISSILES. DOBBINS (DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR EUROPE) INTERJECTED THAT KORNIEENKO NOW SEEMED TO BE SAYING THAT SOME MISSILES MIGHT IN FACT BE DESTROYED. SHULTZ SAID THAT ANDROPOV HAD GOT HEADLINES FOR THIS 'MOVE', BUT NOTHING HAD BEEN SAID ABOUT RESTRICTIONS ON SOVIET SYSTEMS IN ASIA. ADMIRAL HOWE (DIRECTOR FOR POLITICO-MILITARY AFFAIRS) SAID THAT IN ASIA THE RUSSIANS WERE MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF THIRTY SIX MORE SS20S. GROMYKO'S LINE, MEANWHILE, WAS THAT THE US HAD CONTRIVED THE SHOOTING DOWN OF THE KOREAN AIRLINER IN ORDER TO FRUSTRATE PROGRESS IN ARMS CONTROL.

5. MR HESELTINE ASKED WHETHER ANDROPOV, LIKE HIS PREDECESSORS, WAS NOT GOING TO WANT TO MAKE HIS MARK ON HISTORY. SHULTZ SAID THAT HE HAD THE SELF-CONFIDENCE TO DO SO, BUT HIS ENERGIES SEEMED AT PRESENT TO BE DEVOTED RATHER TO TRYING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE SOVIET ECONOMY. MR HESELTINE SAID THAT, NEVERTHELESS, THERE WERE EVIDENCE OF AN INTEREST IN SECTIONS OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP IN AN ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENT. SHULTZ SAID THAT IF THAT WAS SO, THE RUSSIANS WOULD HAVE THEIR CHANCE TO GET ONE.

6. MR HESELTINE SAID THAT DEPLOYMENTS IN BRITAIN WOULD GO AHEAD ON SCHEDULE. SHULTZ CONGRATULATED HIM ON THE HANDLING OF PUBLIC OPINION ON THESE ISSUES. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM SHULTZ, MR HESELTINE SAID THAT HE HAD MENTIONED TO WEINBERGER THE NEED TO CONSULT THE GERMANS ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THEM OF THE BEGINNING OF INF DEPLOYMENT IN BRITAIN IN RELATION TO THE MID-NOVEMBER DEBATE IN THE BUNDESTAG.

WRIGHT