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TELELETTER

FROM : D C A MADDEN, MOSCOW

FILE REFERENCE : 021/68

FOLLOWING FOR : D G MANNING, EESD, FCO

COPIES TO : ROME

WASHINGTON

2. Mr. Robinson
Mr. Johnson

DATED: 17 NOVEMBER 1980

cc. / R.D. - Mrs. Cowan.

VISIT OF ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

1. THERE WAS A COMMUNITY BRIEFING THIS MORNING BY THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR WHICH ADDED SOME POINTS TO THE ACCOUNT CONTAINED IN ANDREW WOOD'S LETTER OF 14 NOVEMBER.
2. THE ITALIANS HAD LITTLE NEW TO SAY ABOUT THE EXCHANGES BETWEEN COLOMBO AND GROMYKO EXCEPT ON THE FOLLOWING TWO POINTS :-
 - (A) IRAN/IRAQ
GROMYKO STATED THAT AT PRESENT THE SOVIET UNION WAS SUPPLYING ARMS TO NEITHER PARTY. HE ALSO REFERRED TO DISINFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT IN THE WEST - "WE KNOW WHERE IT COMES FROM":
AND
 - (B) MENGISTU'S VISIT
GROMYKO SAID THAT MENGISTU HAD BEEN VERY CRITICAL ABOUT SOMALI POLICY. THE SOVIET UNION AGREED WITH HIM ON THE SUBJECT OF US BASES IN SOMALIA. THE SOVIET UNION HAD BEEN ACCUSED OF HAVING A BASE ON BERBERA. NOW EVERYONE ACCEPTED THE PRESENCE OF US BASES THERE AND CRITICIZED THE RUSSIANS OVER AFGHANISTAN.
3. THERE WERE ALSO SOME ADDITIONAL DETAILS OF COLOMBO'S MEETING WITH BREZHNEV, PARTICULARLY ON THE SUBJECT OF TNF. BREZHNEV ARGUED THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD REPLACED ANALOGOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS. OTHERS, WHICH HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY HAD SUCH WEAPONS, WERE NOW UPSETTING THE BALANCE BY INSTALLING THEM. PROGRESS IN THE TALKS IN GENEVA NOW HAD TO AWAIT REAGAN, BUT THEY MUST INCLUDE FBS. ALL EUROPE MUST BE INTERESTED IN THE PROGRESS OF THESE TALKS AND HE HOPED THAT ITALY TOOK A RESPONSIBLE ATTITUDE. WHY HAD SOME COUNTRIES ACCEPTED MISSILES WITHOUT WEIGHING THE CONSEQUENCES? SOVIET POLICY WAS TO RAISE THE LIVING STANDARDS OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE. THIS WAS THE AXIS OF THEIR POLICY, INCLUDING FOREIGN POLICY. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE HAD PREPARED PLANS ON THE BASE OF DETENTE, DISARMAMENT AND COLLABORATION. IN REPLY COLOMBO SUGGESTED THAT THE BALANCE OF FORCES SHOULD BE AT THE LOWEST POSSIBLE LEVEL, AND ACCUSED THE SOVIET UNION OF CAUSING DISEQUILIBRIUM WITH THE SS20.
4. AT ONE POINT COLOMBO MENTIONED NORTH/SOUTH PROBLEMS, EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD CO-OPERATE. BREZHNEV FAILED TO UNDERSTAND AND THOUGHT THAT COLOMBO WAS REFERRING TO SOUTH ITALY. GROMYKO INTERVENED TO EXPLAIN THE BACKGROUND AND THE UN CONFERENCE. IN AN ASIDE TO GROMYKO, BREZHNEV SAID JOKINGLY THAT HE HAD DONE A BAD JOB AT THE UN. GROMYKO REPLIED BY POINTING OUT THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN THERE AND HAD NOT THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT.

SIGNED : D MADDEN

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