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FROM BIS NEW YORK 280405Z FEB 81

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 04 OF 27 FEBRUARY

INFO IMMEDIATE 10 DOWING STREET (FOR ANSON, PRESS OFFICE),  
OOI, WASHINGTON

FOLLOWING ARE EDITED EXTRACTS OF PRIME MINISTER'S TV INTERVIEW  
ON THE MACNEIL/LEHRER PROGRAMME ON THE PUBLIC BROADCASTING NETWORK  
ON 27 FEBRUARY AT 1930 EST.

BEGINS

EXTENSION OF STAY IN WASHINGTON

INTERVIEWER: A SHORT WHILE AGO IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT YOU ARE DELAYING  
YOUR DEPARTURE FROM WASHINGTON IN THE MORNING TO HAVE A SPECIAL  
UNSCHEDULED SECOND SESSION WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN. HAS SOMETHING  
URGENT ARISEN, OR SOMETHING SPECIAL OR WHAT?

PRIME MINISTER: NO I THINK IT IS A LOVELY IDEA FOR MY HUSBAND AND  
ME TO GO AROUND TO THE WHITE HOUSE TO SAY GOODBYE AND TO SAY HOW  
VERY MUCH WE HAVE ENJOYED THE TRIP. HOW VALUABLE WE HAVE FOUND  
THE WHOLE VISIT. HOW VERY MUCH WE HAVE LOVED IT. AND HOW WE HOPE  
THAT THIS REALLY WILL USHER IN A NEW ERA OF UNDERSTANDING AND  
COOPERATION. IT ISN'T SOMETHING SUDDEN, SURPRISING, QUESTIONABLE.  
IT'S JUST REALLY RATHER WONDERFUL HOSPITALITY. AND WE ARE  
DELIGHTED.

INTERVIEWER: WE THOUGHT THAT MAYBE SOMETHING HAD COME UP ON EL  
SALVADOR OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. BUT THAT'S NOT THE CASE -RIGHT?

PRIME MINISTER: I DON'T THINK WE WOULD BE SO HAM-HANDED AS TO DO  
IT THAT WAY IF IT HAD.

EL SALVADOR

INTERVIEWER: ON EL SALVADOR, DO YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS NOW THAT THE  
SOVIET BLOC THROUGH CUBA AND NICARAGUA ARE SUPPLYING ARMS TO THE  
LEFTIST GUERRILLAS.

PRIME MINISTER: WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THERE ARE SUBSTANTIAL  
SUPPLIES OF ARMS GETTING THERE AND THAT WE ARE PRETTY CERTAIN WHERE  
THEY COME FROM. WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THIS IS A GROSS INTERFERENCE  
WITH THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF EL SALVADOR. THAT EVERYTHING MUST  
BE DONE TO TRY TO STOP THAT INTERFERENCE. THERE ARE, OF COURSE,  
TERRIBLE THINGS GOING ON IN EL SALVADOR. IF THAT INTERFERENCE CAN  
BE STOPPED, THEN OBVIOUSLY IT'S FOR THE PEOPLE THERE TO SORT OUT  
THEIR OWN FUTURE IN THEIR OWN WAY. AND WE HOPE THAT NATURALLY THEY  
WILL COME TO A FULLY DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM.

INTERVIEWER: IN YOUR CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY  
HAIG AND OTHERS, WERE THE FULL RANGE OF OPTIONS THAT COULD  
BE EMPLOYED TO STOP THIS OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE, WERE THEY GONE  
OVER WITH YOU?

PRIME MINISTER: NO, ACTUALLY THE PROPORTION OF QUESTIONS I HAVE  
HAD ON EL SALVADOR FROM INTERVIEWERS FAR EXCEEDS THE PROPORTION  
OF TIME WE SPENT ON DISCUSSING THIS PARTICULAR MATTER. WE DID,  
OF COURSE, TALK ABOUT IT. WE TALKED ABOUT A LOT OF OTHER THINGS AS  
WELL.

/ CUBA

CUBA

INTERVIEWER: WHAT ABOUT CUBA SPECIFICALLY? THE SECRETARY OF STATE, ALEXANDER HAIG, SAID TODAY THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS PREPARED TO STOP THE ARMS FLOW (TO EL SALVADOR) AT THE SOURCE - MEANING CUBA. WOULD YOU SUPPORT THE UNITED STATES IF IT TOOK SOME ACTION AGAINST CUBA? IF THAT WAS DESIGNED TO STOP THE FLOW OF ARMS?

PRIME MINISTER: I AM CERTAIN OF TWO THINGS. FIRST THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS PROMISED TO CONSULT US OVER ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS AND THAT EVEN WHEN WE ARE CONSULTED WE OWE THE UNITED STATES OUR JUDGEMENT. WHAT OUR JUDGEMENT IS WILL DEPEND UPON THE CIRCUMSTANCES. AND I'LL WAIT UNTIL THE TIME AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES TO GIVE IT. AND THAT IS THE ONLY WISE ANSWER I CAN GIVE YOU.

POLAND

INTERVIEWER: IS YOUR GOVERNMENT OPTIMISTIC NOW THAT SOVIET MILITARY INTERVENTION IN POLAND CAN BE AVOIDED. HOW DO YOU ASSESS THAT DANGER NOW?

PRIME MINISTER: ONE NEVER KNOWS. IT'S VERY, VERY UNWISE TO ASSUME THAT THE DANGER IS WHOLLY PASSED. WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN IN POLAND IS SOMETHING QUITE NEW IN THE COMMUNIST WORLD. AFTER ALL COMMUNISM IT TOTAL, CENTRAL CONTROL. EVERY ACTION DETERMINED BY GOVERNMENT. NO SUCH THING AS A MORALITY DETERMINED BY ETHICS. ONLY A MORALITY OF WHAT IS POLITICALLY RIGHT AND POLITICALLY WRONG FOR THE EXPEDIENCY OF THE MOMENT DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNMENT. TOTAL, CENTRAL CONTROL. WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN IN POLAND IS A NEW SOURCE OF POWER ARISING. IT IS NOT JUST THE KIND OF THING THAT YOU SOMETIMES GET WHEN YOU GET A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT - AN UPRISING OF PEOPLE WANTING TO TAKE OVER CENTRAL CONTROL.

IT IS NOT THAT. IT IS, THEIR BEING A COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT, A NEW SOURCE OF POWER ARISING IN THE STATE. THAT HAS NEVER HAPPENED IN A COMMUNIST COUNTRY. IT WILL SUBSTANTIALLY MODIFY COMMUNIST CONTROL. NOW, I HAVE NOT THE SLIGHTEST SHADOW OF A DOUBT THAT THE SOVIET UNION HOPES THIS NEW CENTRE OF POWER CAN SOMEHOW BE ABSORBED AND NEUTRALISED, AND IS PROBABLY WATCHING EVENTS AS CLOSELY AS WE ARE. WE ARE SAYING AGAIN, JUST AS IN THE SAME WAY AS WE WERE PREVIOUSLY OVER EL SALVADOR, POLAND MUST BE ALLOWED TO WORK OUT HER OWN DESTINY, IN HER OWN WAY. IT IS ABSOLUTELY VITAL THAT SHE DOES SO. BUT IT IS A VERY INTERESTING PHENOMENON. AND I HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE WHOLE COMMUNIST WORLD IS AWARE OF IT. NOW I WOULDN'T SAY THAT THE DANGER HAS WHOLLY PASSED. IT WOULD BE VERY UNWISE TO SAY SO. BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO WATCH WHAT IS HAPPENING AND REALLY ALWAYS TRY TO PREPARE FOR WHAT MAY HAPPEN. I HOPE EVERYONE LEAVES POLAND ALONE.

INTERVIEWER: IF THE SOVIET UNION ELECTS NOT TO LEAVE POLAND ALONE, IS THERE ANY WAY THE WEST CAN ALSO LEAVE POLAND ALONE?

PRIME MINISTER: IF THE SOVIET UNION DECIDED NOT TO LEAVE POLAND ALONE, IT WOULD HAVE, I THINK, A DISASTROUS EFFECT ON THE WHOLE ATMOSPHERE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST FOR A VERY LONG TIME IT WOULD VIRTUALLY BE THE END OF ALL POSSIBILITY OF DETENTE. BUT IT HASN'T HAPPENED YET. WE HOPE IT WON'T HAPPEN. AND THE MORE WE CAN MAKE IT PERFECTLY CLEAR THAT POLAND MUST BE LEFT ALONE, THE BETTER. WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO IN EUROPE,

AND I THINK THE UNITED STATES TOO, IS TO HELP OUT WITH SHORTAGES OF FOOD, AND TO HELP OUT WITH TRADE CREDIT BECAUSE THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF POLAND IS VERY, VERY DIFFICULT, ALMOST TRAGIC AT THE MOMENT. AND WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO IS TO HELP HER GET THROUGH ON THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE, TO HELP HER WITH CREDITS FOR TRADE, SO THAT SHE CAN PUT HER OWN ECONOMY TOGETHER AND THEN SORT OUT HER INTERNAL, POLITICAL SITUATION.

#### THE MIDDLE EAST

INTERVIEWER: ARE YOU GOING TO CONTINUE WITH THE EUROPEAN INITIATIVE, AS IT IS CALLED?

PRIME MINISTER: THE SECURE BOUNDARIES OF ISRAEL, SO FAR, ARE BASED ON RESOLUTION 242, BUT AS YOU KNOW THERE IS ROOM FOR JUST A LITTLE BIT OF MANOEUVRE THERE IN THE TERMS OF RESOLUTION 242.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SELF-DETERMINATION? WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY NATIONAL IDENTITY? AS YOU KNOW THERE ARE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, QUITE A LOT OF THEM, NOT ON THE WEST BANK. WELL FIRST THERE'S THE GAZA STRIP, THERE ARE CAMPS IN JORDAN, THERE ARE CAMPS IN SYRIA, THERE ARE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE FLOURISHING, BECAUSE SOME OF THEM ARE VERY TALENTED AND WONDERFUL TRADESMEN AND PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE AND, I IMAGINE, THAT THERE ARE A LOT OF THEM WHO WOULD WISH TO STAY WHERE THEY ARE NOW: BUT ALL OF THESE THINGS REALLY HAVEN'T RECEIVED THE DETAILED CONSIDERATION THEY WARRANT AND WE ARE GRADUALLY CONTINUING TO DO THAT AND WE HOPE IT WILL BE HELPFUL. IN THE MEANTIME, OF COURSE, THERE WILL SOON BE AN ELECTION IN ISRAEL AND I DON'T ANTICIPATE THAT THERE WILL BE ANY GREAT MOVES FORWARD UNTIL THAT HAS BEEN DECIDED UPON.

#### NEUTRON WEAPONS

INTERVIEWER: SENATOR JOHN TOWER, WHO IS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES, SAID TODAY THAT HE THOUGHT IT WAS PROBABLY UNWISE FOR THE UNITED STATES TO PUSH FOR DEPLOYMENT OF THE NEUTRON BOMB IN EUROPE BECAUSE, GIVEN THE HISTORY, POLITICAL HISTORY, IT WOULD STIR UP MORE POLITICAL PROBLEMS

THAN THE UNITED STATES NEEDED. DO YOU AGREE WITH HIM THAT IT WOULD BE UNWISE POLITICALLY TO PUSH FOR DEPLOYMENT OF THE BOMB?

PRIME MINISTER: WELL DECISIONS HAVE NOT BEEN TAKEN ON THAT YET, BUT FIRST YOU KNOW THE WORD 'BOMB' IS THE WRONG ONE HERE.

IT SHOULD NEVER, NEVER, HAVE GOT THAT NAME. YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS. THERE'S MASSIVE TANK ARMOUR ON THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES, AND THIS ARMOUR CAN MOVE FORWARD IN COLOSSAL ARMOURMENT MOVEMENTS, AND WHAT THAT WEAPON IS, IS REALLY AN ANTI-TANK WEAPON AND A VERY EFFECTIVE WEAPON FOR STOPPING THOSE TREMENDOUS MOVEMENTS, A VERY VERY EFFECTIVE ONE. WE DON'T, I'M AFRAID, HAVE THAT AMOUNT OF ARMOUR AND THEREFORE THE SOVIET UNION WILL NOT BE LIKELY TO NEED THAT KIND OF WEAPON. NO DECISION AS YET HAS BEEN TAKEN UPON IT. I KNOW WHAT PEOPLE THINK. THEY THINK THAT POSSIBLY IT MIGHT LOWER THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD, BUT YOU'VE GOT IN FACT TO HAVE SOME EFFECTIVE ANTI-TANK WEAPON AGAINST THAT COLOSSAL THREAT OF ARMOUR. WHAT THAT WEAPON IS HAS STILL YET TO BE DECIDED.

INTERVIEWER: IT SOUNDS AS THOUGH YOU RATHER LIKE THE IDEA OF THE NEUTRON BOMB?

PRIME MINISTER:

PRIME MINISTER: I WANT AN EFFECTIVE ANTI-TANK WEAPON. I KNOW THAT MASSIVE AMOUNT OF ARMOUR THEY'VE GOT, AND WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT REALLY IS A MOVEMENT OF WHAT I MAY CALL CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS AND ARMS - ONE TALKS ABOUT THOSE AS IF THEY WERE ALMOST COMMONPLACE, WELL THEY MIGHT BE COMMONPLACE BUT THEY'RE STILL EXTREMELY DANGEROUS, AND ONE WANTS A PROPER MEANS OF AVOIDING THAT.....THE NEUTRON ONE WOULD BE ONE PARTICULAR WAY.

INTERVIEWER: I JUST WONDERED, IS HE RIGHT, THAT ATTEMPTING TO PERSUADE THE EUROPEAN ALLIES TO DEPLOY IT, AS THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION ONCE DID, THEN REVERSED ITSELF, WOULD CREATE SO MANY POLITICAL PROBLEMS THAT IT WOULD BE....

PRIME MINISTER: THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION ASKED EUROPE WHAT IT THOUGHT AND THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION HAS SAID, BEFORE FURTHER DECISIONS ARE TAKEN AGAIN, THAT EUROPE WILL BE CONSULTED. I MUST SAY THAT THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION IS BEING VERY, VERY FIRM, THAT IT WILL CONSULT BEFORE THESE DECISIONS ARE TAKEN.

ENDS

FCO PLEASE PASS TO 10 DOWNING STREET (FOR ANSON, PRESS OFFICE)

NIXON

FCO/WH.  
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[PASSED AS REQUESTED]