

RR BEIRUT

RR TEL AVIV

GR 800

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY 081830Z

FM ROME 081705Z FEB 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NO. 074 OF 08 FEB 83

INFO IMMEDIATE PARIS, WASHINGTON AND ROUTINE BONN, UKDEL NATO,

UKDIS GENEVA, BEIRUT, TEL AVIV

SAVING FOR INFO MOSCOW, THE HAGUE, BRUSSELS, HOLY SEE

ADVANCE COPY

X8

Hd / Defence Sect  
n / (ACD)  
n / (WED)  
n / (EES)

PS  
Sir Hubbard  
Mr Wright  
Mr Gillmore

RC

No 10 DS

VISIT OF VICE PRESIDENT BUSH

SUMMARY

1. BUSH CAME, SAW AND HAD NO NEED TO CONQUER. HIS PRESENTATION ON INF WAS SIMILAR TO THAT IN OTHER CAPITALS, COMBINING A FIRM RESTATEMENT OF THE ZERO OPTION WITH WILLINGNESS TO EXPLORE OTHER POSSIBILITIES. THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT CONFIRMED THEIR COMMITMENT TO GLCM BASING. THERE WAS AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE MIDDLE EAST.

DETAIL

2. BUSH LEFT ROME THIS MORNING AFTER A BUSY 3-DAY VISIT. HE SAW PERTINI, FANFANI, COLOMBO, MORLINO (PRESIDENT OF SENATE), GORIA (TREASURY MINISTER), CIAMPI (BANK OF ITALY), SPADOLINI AND THE HEADS OF ALL COALITION PARTIES EXCEPT DE MITA (ILL) AND ZANONE (AWAY, SUBSTITUTED BY MALAGODI). HE ALSO PAID A VISIT TO THE VATICAN. HE CHOSE NOT TO CALL ON IOTTI (PCI PRESIDENT OF CHAMBER) OR BERLINGUER (PCI SECRETARY).

3. THE MFA (TALIANI AND MOSCATO) GAVE A COMMUNITY BRIEFING TODAY ON BUSH'S TALKS WITH COLOMBO. INF DOMINATED THEM. BUSH SAID THAT ZERO OPTION REMAINED THE GOAL OF THE U S GOVERNMENT, BUT THEY WERE DETERMINED TO EXPLORE IN GENEVA EVERY OPPORTUNITY OF REACHING AGREEMENT. THE ZERO OPTION WAS NOT A "TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT" PROPOSAL. HE UNDERLINED U S DETERMINATION TO CONSULT NATO ALLIES AND TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY IN GENEVA FOR A LOWER LEVEL OF NUCLEAR BALANCE. IT WAS ESSENTIAL NOT TO LET THE USSR SEIZE THE INITIATIVE OR PORTRAY THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION TO WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION AS BEING IN FAVOUR OF AN ARMS RACE. ANDROPOV'S PROPOSALS WERE REPETITIVE AND REJECTED THE ESSENTIAL CONCEPT OF BALANCE.

4. COLOMBO STRESSED THE NEED FOR CLOSE COORDINATION WITHIN NATO

4. ~~COLOMBO STRESSED THE NEED FOR CLOSE COORDINATION WITHIN NATO~~  
IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANT NEW ELEMENTS IN THE SOVIET POSITION. THE ALLIES MUST NOT BE SLOW TO REACT. ITALY TOO WAS CONVINCED THAT THE ZERO OPTION SHOULD REMAIN THE FINAL OBJECTIVE, BUT THIS DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF INTERMEDIATE ARRANGEMENTS. NATO COULD NEVER ACCEPT A SOVIET MONOPOLY OF INF, AND MUST INSIST ON THE ESSENTIAL CRITERIA OF SECURITY, PARITY AND BALANCE. BUSH'S VISIT WAS WELCOME, NOT LEAST BECAUSE IT WOULD SHOW THE ITALIAN PUBLIC THAT THE U S GOVERNMENT WERE SENSITIVE TO THE VIEWS OF EUROPEAN ALLIES.
5. BUSH CONFIRMED THAT NITZE HAD A MANDATE TO EXPLORE ANY SIGN IN GENEVA OF SOVIET FLEXIBILITY. NATO ALLIES WOULD BE KEPT INFORMED OF PROGRESS. HE AND COLOMBO AGREED THAT BRITISH AND FRENCH NUCLEAR SYSTEMS MUST BE COMPLETELY EXCLUDED FROM THESE TALKS.
6. TALIANI COMMENTED THAT BUSH WAS MORE CONCERNED TO HEAR AND REPORT ITALIAN VIEWS THAN TO CONVINCe COLOMBO OF THE U S NEGOTIATING POSITION. IN PRIVATE AS IN PUBLIC HE HAD INSISTED ON THE NEED FOR THE USSR TO MAKE THE NEXT MOVE IN GENEVA. COLOMBO HAD FOUND BUSH WELL AWARE OF EUROPEAN CONCERNS BUT RATHER VAGUE ON THE MECHANISM OF CONSULTATION.
7. THE MIDDLE EAST WAS DISCUSSED BRIEFLY WITH BUSH BUT IN GREATER DETAIL WITH HABIB, WHO VISITED ROME YESTERDAY EN ROUTE FOR JERUSALEM. THE AMERICANS EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR THE LEBANESE/ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS. HABIB'S THREE AIMS REMAINED WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN TROOPS FROM LEBANON, RESTORATION OF LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY, AND ADEQUATE SECURITY GUARANTEES FOR ISRAEL'S NORTHERN FRONTIER. AN AGREEMENT ON PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL WOULD NOT FIND FAVOUR WITH THE U S GOVERNMENT: COLOMBO REPLIED THAT IT COULD BE A VALUABLE FIRST STEP TOWARDS FULL WITHDRAWAL. COLOMBO RESTATED ITALY'S WILLINGNESS TO HELP IN LEBANON AND SAID THAT GEMAYEL'S TASK WAS GETTING HARDER.
8. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY, BUSH INSISTED ON THE MORAL ARGUMENT FOR THE SZERO OPTION AND EXPRESSED OPTIMISM AT THE END OF HIS TALKS IN ITALY. HE SIDE-STEPPED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BULGARIAN CONNECTION (AS DID THE MFA AT TODAY'S BRIEFING).
9. PRESS COMMENT HAS BEEN GENERALLY FAVOURABLE, BUT WITH THE USUAL POLITICAL COLOURING OF EACH NEWSPAPER. THOSE ON THE RIGHT EMPHASISED ITALIAN LOYALTY TO NATO AND THE U S, WHILE THOSE ON THE LEFT CLAIMED THAT THE ITALIANS HAD BEEN SOFT AND HAD NO NEW IDEAS OF THEIR OWN TO OFFER. ACCORDING TO UNITA (PCI) THE BUSH TALKS WERE A PROPAGANDA EXERCISE. THE CENTRE PRESS STRESSED THAT ITALY WAS ASKING TO PLAY A GREATER ROLE IN DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS. AVANTI (PSI) GAVE PROMINENCE TO A STATEMENT BY CRAXI THAT DECISIONS ON MISSILES IN EUROPE WERE FIRST AND FOREMOST FOR EUROPEANS TO MAKE.
10. WE ARE SEEKING AN OVERALL ASSESSMENT FROM THE U S EMBASSY.

10. WE ARE SEEKING AN OVERALL ASSESSMENT FROM THE U S EMBASSY.

F C O PLEASE PASS SAVING ADDRESSES EXCEPT HOLY SEE

ARCULUS

NNNN