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17

HS/SOVIET ARMS CONTROL TALKS

PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR LUCE
PS/PUS
MR DEREK THOMAS
MR GOODALL
MR JENKINS
MR WESTON
MR DAVID THOMAS

MR POWELL, NO 10 DOWNING ST

MR D NICHOLLS, DUS(P) } MOD
NPS }
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FROM UKDEL NATO 141655Z FEB 85

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 034 OF 14 FEBRUARY

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON BONN PARIS MODUK (DUS(P) NPS AND DACU)
ROUTINE MOSCOW ROME UKDIS GENEVA

INFO SAVING BRUSSELS COPENHAGEN THE HAGUE LISBON LUXEMBOURG OSLO
MADRID REYKJAVIK UKDEL VIENNA UKDEL STOCKHOLM OTTAWA ANKARA ATHENS
UKMIS NEW YORK DUBLIN TOKYO

BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENCE (BMD)

SUMMARY

1. THE NAC HELD A FOUR-HOUR DISCUSSION TODAY ON BMD, ON THE BASIS OF A BRIEFING ON SOVIET AND US (SDI) PROGRAMMES PROVIDED BY A US TEAM LED BY GENERAL ABRAHAMSON (SDI PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, DOD). NO STARTLINGLY NEW POINTS EMERGED ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE. A LOW-KEY BUT VALUABLE MEETING.
2. US REPRESENTATIVES UNDERLINED THEIR WISH TO KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH ALLIES; ALSO EMPHASIZED COMPREHENSIVE OBJECTIVES OF SDI, AND NEED FOR ANY DEPLOYMENTS TO BE DECIDED AT LATER STAGE AND IN PROPER STRATEGIC CONTEXT. RECOGNITION OF NEED FOR ALLIANCE TO MAINTAIN COHESION, IN FACE OF LIKELY SOVIET TACTICS, AND HENCE FOR CONTINUED CONSULTATIONS. RESERVATIONS AND SCEPTICISM FROM EUROPEANS COUCHED IN INTERROGATIVE AND NON-CONFRONTATIONAL TERMS. BUT EUROPEAN CONCERNS STILL CLEARLY UNSATISFIED. NON-SUBSTANTIVE REFERENCES TO EUROPEAN PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH.

DETAIL

3. THE DISCUSSION WAS PREFACED BY A DIA BRIEFING ON SOVIET BMD. IN SUMMARY, THE SOVIET STRATEGY FOR WAR-FIGHTING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FIRST STRIKE CAPABILITY PROVIDED STRONG INCENTIVES

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3. THE DISCUSSION WAS PREFACED BY A DIA BRIEFING ON SOVIET BMD. IN SUMMARY, THE SOVIET STRATEGY FOR WAR-FIGHTING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FIRST STRIKE CAPABILITY PROVIDED STRONG INCENTIVES FOR BMD DEPLOYMENTS, WHICH THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT RAPIDLY. AT PRESENT THEY WERE PURSUING SDI-TYPE PROGRAMMES. DETAILS OF THESE WERE PROVIDED IN FAMILIAR TERMS. ONE NEW ELEMENT WAS THE POSSIBLE IDENTIFICATION OF A NEW GROUND-BASED ASAT CAPABILITY IN THE PANIR MOUNTAINS. THE DIA CONCLUSION WAS THAT, WHATEVER THE WEST DID, THE RUSSIANS WOULD PROCEED TO DEPLOY NEW SYSTEMS FOR BMD PURPOSES.

4. THE SECOND BRIEFING, BY ABRAHAMSON, COVERED THE US SDI PROGRAMME. HE EMPHASISED REPEATEDLY THAT US AIMS HAD NOT CHANGED, AND SPECIFICALLY HAD NOT BEGUN TO FOCUS MAINLY ON LIMITED OR POINT DEFENCE. COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION FOR ALL THE PEOPLES AND WEAPONS OF THE ALLIANCE WAS THE CONTINUED OBJECTIVE. ABRAHAMSON ALSO EMPHASISED THAT THE US WAS ONLY COMMITTED TO RESEARCH, THAT DECISIONS ON DEVELOPMENT WOULD ONLY BEGIN TO ARISE IN THE EARLY 1990S, AND THAT UNTIL THEN THE US WAS DETERMINED TO REMAIN WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE ABM TREATY. IN PROVIDING DETAILS OF CURRENT US RESEARCH, ABRAHAMSON DID NOT BREAK NEW GROUND. HIS BRIEFING INDICATED THE WIDE RANGE OF TECHNOLOGIES NOW UNDER STUDY AND SUGGESTED THAT, WHILE IN THE SHORT TERM THERE MIGHT ALREADY BE SOME MEANS TO COUNTER MINOR MISSILE THREATS, IMPROVEMENTS IN ORDERS OF MAGNITUDE WERE STILL NEEDED FOR CREDIBLE DEFENCES AGAINST THE WIDER THREAT.

5. IN THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION ALLIED REPRESENTATIVES WELCOMED THE EVIDENCE OF CONTINUED US EAGERNESS TO CONSULT, AND WERE CAREFUL TO AVOID ANY DIRECT TONE OF CRITICISM. CURIEN (FRANCE) AND BORCH (DENMARK) WERE LEAST SUCCESSFUL IN CONCEALING THEIR RESERVATIONS ABOUT US INTENTIONS AND SCEPTICISM ABOUT THEIR EVENTUAL SUCCESS. CURIEN DREW ATTENTION TO THE WIDE RANGE OF UNCERTAINTIES (INCLUDING FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL PROBLEMS) AND POTENTIAL INSTABILITIES WHICH SURROUNDED THE SDI. WHILE PAYING TRIBUTE TO US QUOTE CREATIVE INGENUITY UNQUOTE, HE UNDERLINED THE NEED FOR CAUTION IN REVIEWING THE SCIENTIFIC POSSIBILITIES AND IN PREVENTING RESEARCH RUNNING OUT OF CONTROL. THE ABM TREATY LIMITS WERE OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE IN THAT CONTEXT. HE NOTED THE IMPACT OF NEW BMD WORK ON PUBLIC OPINION, AND CAUTIONED AGAINST ENCOURAGING THE VIEW THAT NUCLEAR DETERRENCE COULD BE REPLACED AS THE BASIC WESTERN STRATEGY IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

6. RANTZAU (FRG) RAISED FAMILIAR POINTS ABOUT THE VULNERABILITY OF DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS, THE NEED TO COUNTER NON-BALLISTIC THREATS, AND THE ROLE OF LIMITED DEFENCES AS A WAY TOWARDS COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION. HE ALSO UNDERLINED THE NEED FOR AN IMPROVED PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF US ARGUMENTS AND VIEWS, INCLUDING ON THE SOVIET EFFORT. BERG (NORWAY) WARNED AGAINST THE DANGER THAT US UNWILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE ON BMD COULD ALLOW THE SOVIET UNION TO BLOCK PROGRESS IN OTHER AREAS OF ARMS CONTROL. MATHYS (CANADA) ASKED WHAT EVIDENCE THERE WAS FOR SOVIET READINESS TO CO-OPERATE IN RE-NEGOTIATING THE ABM TREATY, AS WOULD BE NECESSARY IF DEPLOYMENTS WERE TO PROCEED. HE ALSO ASKED ABOUT THE SOVIET NEED TO UPGRADE THEIR COMPUTER CAPABILITIES IF THEY WERE TO PARALLEL US ADVANCES.

7. AFTER REAFFIRMING UK SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FOUR POINTS OF CAMP DAVID, I ASKED FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON HOW THE AMERICANS PLANNED TO COUNTER NON-BALLISTIC MISSILE THREATS; TO WHAT EXTENT SDI-RELATED FACILITIES WOULD NEED TO BE BASED IN

HOW THE AMERICANS PLANNED TO COUNTER NON-BALLISTIC MISSILE THREATS; TO WHAT EXTENT SDI-RELATED FACILITIES WOULD NEED TO BE BASED IN EUROPE; HOW FUTURE SDI FUNDING MIGHT BE PLANNED, AND IN THAT CONTEXT WHETHER THE AMERICANS COULD SAY ANYTHING AT THIS STAGE ABOUT THE LIKELY COST TRADE-OFF BETWEEN DEFENCES AND SOVIET COUNTER-MEASURES, INCLUDING INCREASED LEVELS OF OFFENSIVE FORCES. I ALSO WONDERED HOW FAR THE US HAD DEVELOPED THEIR INTERPRETATION OF THE AIM IN THE SHULTZ-GROMYKO COMMUNIQUE TO NEGOTIATE QUOTE ON PREVENTING AN ARMS RACE IN SPACE UNQUOTE.

8. IN RESPONSE TO THESE AND OTHER QUESTIONS, ABRAHAMSON, DOBBINS (STATE DEPARTMENT) AND GAFFNEY (OSD/DOD) NOTED THAT NO DECISIONS COULD OR WOULD BE TAKEN ON DEPLOYMENTS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS; THAT THE SDI RESEARCH WAS PARTLY STIMULATED BY SOVIET EFFORTS AND PARTLY INTENDED AS A SEARCH FOR A BETTER FUTURE; AND THAT ANY DEVELOPMENT OF DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS WOULD BE EVOLUTIONARY, I.E. A BASIS FOR COMPREHENSIVE DEFENCE WOULD BE BUILT UP FROM A PROGRESSIVE ACCUMULATION OF SUB-SETS OF DEFENCES, WITH THE ULTIMATE AIM OF COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION ALWAYS IN MIND.

9. ON EUROPEAN PARTICIPATION, GAFFNEY SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION BELIEVED THAT THE ALLIES SHOULD BE INVOLVED BOTH IN THE RESEARCH AND IN ANY DEPLOYMENTS, IF THESE WERE DECIDED. THE PENTAGON WAS STILL ASSESSING THE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION WHICH THE ALLIES MIGHT MAKE. IT WOULD BE PREMATURE TO TRY TO TAKE DECISIONS NOW. IN SUBSEQUENT COMMENTS OTHER US REPRESENTATIVES EMPHASIZED THAT THE US WOULD LOOK FOR EUROPEAN HELP, PROVIDED THEY WERE SURE THAT THE ABM TREATY WOULD NOT BE VIOLATED AND THAT EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS WISHED TO CONTRIBUTE.

10. ON US INTENTIONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON SPACE WITH THE RUSSIANS, DOBBINS SAID THAT THE SOVIET RETURN TO GENEVA WAS INFLUENCED BY THE SDI. IT WAS HOWEVER UNCLEAR WHETHER THEY WOULD BE SEEKING A DEAL ON IT, OR ONLY USING IT AS A PLATFORM FOR THEIR OWN PROPAGANDA PURPOSES. TALKS WOULD START VERY SOON ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF DEFENCES FOR ARMS CONTROL, STRATEGY, STABILITY ETC. BUT REAL NEGOTIATIONS COULD ONLY BEGIN WHEN IT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED WHETHER DEFENCES WERE ACTUALLY FEASIBLE, I.E. IN THE EARLY 1990S AT THE EARLIEST. SUBSEQUENTLY, DOBBINS SPOKE OF THREE STAGES ENVISAGED BY THE US:

i) FIRST, THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SHARP REDUCTIONS IN OFFENSIVE FORCES AND THE REINFORCEMENT OF THE ABM TREATY;

ii) SUBSEQUENTLY (PERHAPS IN THE EARLY 1990S), NEGOTIATION ON FURTHER REDUCTIONS IN THESE FORCES, AND COOPERATION ON THE TRANSITION TO A STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH DEFENCES PLAYED A GREATER PART; THIS SECOND STAGE WOULD DEPEND UPON THE RESULTS OF CURRENT RESEARCH; AND

iii) ULTIMATELY, THE ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

11. ON SOVIET COUNTER-MEASURES, THE US TEAM NOTED THAT THE FLETCHER STUDY HAD CONCLUDED THAT THESE COULD BE OFF-SET BY EFFECTIVE DEFENCES. THE US WOULD CONTINUE, AS A SECONDARY ELEMENT OF THE MAIN SDI PROGRAMME, TO STUDY POSSIBLE DEFENCES AGAINST THE NON-BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT. ABRAHAMSON WAS CHAIRING A REVIEW BODY (SDA 2000) ON THIS.

12. ON FUNDING, ABRAHAMSON FELT THAT THE PROJECTED INCREASES MIGHT BEGIN TO LEVEL OFF TOWARDS THE END OF THE DECADE AS THE RESEARCH BECAME MORE TIGHTLY FOCUSED. HE RECOGNISED THE NEED FOR DEFENCES TO BE COST-EFFECTIVE, AND SUGGESTED THAT WITH A MULTIPLE LAYERED SYSTEM THIS SHOULD NOT BE IMPOSSIBLE. THE US WOULD BE READY TO SHARE WITH THE ALLIES THE RESULTS OF THIS RESEARCH WHEN COMPLETED; SO FAR, THESE HAD BEEN ENCOURAGING.

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13. ON SOVIET COMPUTING ABILITY, THE DIA REPRESENTATIVE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE RUSSIANS WOULD SEEK TO UPGRADE THEIR PRESENT CAPABILITY, AND WARNED THAT THEY WOULD TRY TO ACQUIRE NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR THIS PURPOSE FROM WESTERN EUROPE AND JAPAN. THE WEST WOULD NEED TO EXERCISE CAUTION.

14. SUMMING UP, THE SECRETARY GENERAL NOTED THE GREAT IMPORTANCE ATTACHED BY ALL ALLIES TO THE ISSUE. GIVEN THE SOVIET INTEREST IN EXPLOITING DIFFERENCES, SUCH BRIEFINGS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE A VITAL NECESSITY. WIDER BRIEFINGS FOR WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL. IF ASKED, HIS SPOKESMAN WOULD SAY ONLY THAT THE DISCUSSION WAS PART OF CONTINUING CONSULTATION ON THE ISSUE, AND THAT GENERAL ABRAHAMSON AND HIS TEAM HAD BRIEFED ON THE US SDI AND ON SOVIET CAPABILITIES.

15. SINCE THIS DISCUSSION OCCUPIED BOTH MORNING AND AFTERNOON, NO OTHER MEETINGS WERE HELD.

16. FULL RECORD BY BAG.

FCO PASS SAVING COPENHAGEN THE HAGUE LISBON LUXEMBOURG OSLO
MADRID REYKJAVIK UKDEL VIENNA UKDEL STOCKHOLM OTTAWA ANKARA
ATHENS UKMIS NEW YORK DUBLIN TOKYO

DAUNT

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SENT/RECD AT 141826Z JW/DD

IF NEEDED FOR ANY DEPLOYMENTS TO BE DECIDED BY THE
MEMBERS. INCLUDING THE KEYED REACTS OF DEFENSIVE FORCES. A WFO
FROM STRATEGIC CONTEXT. RECOGNITION OF THE NEED FOR ALLIANCE TO
FROM THE TANGIBLE CORRELATION BETWEEN DEFENSE AND SOCIAL CONCEPT
CONCEPT. WHETHER THE UNITED STATES COULD SWAY THROUGH A SINGLE
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FROM THE AMERICANS. BLANKED TO COMPLETE NON-STRATEGIC MISSILE INVEST
OF THE ABOVE FORMS OF CONCEPTS. A WFO ON THE OTHER HAND...