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SAVING TELEGRAM

BY BAG

FROM BONN

TO FCO TEL NO 16 SAVING OF 15 APRIL 1983.

INFO MODUK (FOR DS12, AUS (D STAFF) PS/S OF S), EAST BERLIN, MOSCOW,
NATO POSTS, BMG BERLIN, CIOC(G)

ANTI-NUCLEAR AGITATION IN THE FRG AND THE PROSPECTS FOR INF STATIONING
SUMMARY

1. Anti-nuclear rallies and protests, focussing on suspected US missile sites, will increase in scale and intensity as the time for INF deployment approaches. They are likely to become a major feature of the German scene in the second half of this year. The odds are on some violence occurring, through demonstrations getting out of control or through terrorist groups exploiting the situation. The SPD and trade unions are likely to associate themselves increasingly with non-violent events. The Government see the prospect as essentially a public order problem, not affecting their resolve to station INF if necessary.

DETAIL

2. An assessment of FRG anti-nuclear protest and its political implications may be timely, following the experience of the Easter peace marches and before Chancellor Kohl visits London for the Anglo-German Summit on 22 April. What follows is based on discussion with the authorities concerned and the political parties.

3. Easter anti-nuclear activities in the FRG and Berlin (our Tel No 311) were neither a failure nor a striking success for their instigators. They gave the Communists and their sympathisers at the hard core of the movement further experience in crowd mobilisation and control. The organisers will aim to stage protests of rising scale, frequency and intensity from

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early summer onwards.. They will prefer orderly events, which are more likely to attract really wide support. They have a good chance of succeeding in mobilising very large events of half a million people or more. Their chances of doing so will be much reduced if an intermediate agreement is reached in Geneva. But the hard-core organisers and those implacably opposed to all missiles are expected to continue their protests whatever happens in the negotiations.

4. Apart from mass rallies in cities, the anti-nuclear actions will include blockades and disruption at military sites. US bases in South/Central Germany suspected of providing Pershing II and GLCM sites will be the prime target. Action may spread to Bundeswehr bases. There is no indication of significant problems for UK forces in Germany, but we shall remain in close contact on this with the relevant German authorities.

5. The organisers of the protest movement preach a concept of non-violent civil disobedience which extends to possible material damage, but stops short of violence to persons. Government experts and also the SPD Headquarters think it likely on balance, however, that violent incidents will occur late in the year as a result of terrorist groups exploiting the movement and/or demonstrations getting frustrated and out of control, as has happened with large protests in the past.

6. The authorities are alive to the risk of losing public sympathy through strong methods of demonstration control. The anti-nuclear movement's numbers would be much increased if it had martyrs. Armed clashes between demonstrators and US troops would be particularly damaging. We know in confidence that US commanders in the FRG have instructions to keep the direct involvement of US personnel and the use of force to an

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absolute minimum. US personnel would become involved only if protesters actually entered US installations, and firearms would be used only when there was a threat to life or of capture of highly dangerous (e g nuclear) weapons.

7. The Greens will be fully involved in organising and leading anti-nuclear activities. Some of them are contemplating wider-ranging civil disobedience as well as on-site protests. The SPD, who are drifting rapidly into outright opposition to INF stationing, now encourage their members to take part in demonstrations provided the latter are non-violent, not dominated by other parties and compatible in purpose with the SPD's own programme. These are not easy criteria to enforce and left-wing SPD figures like Lafontaine will certainly not be constrained by them.

The churches too may be represented increasingly in protest actions. in their intention to station INF
8. The Government Parties remain resolute/if necessary. They have warned the USSR publicly since Easter that neither threats nor protests will make them deviate from their policy, sanctioned by the democratic decision of a majority in the 6 March elections, of proceeding with whatever level of deployment proves necessary at the end of this year. On the other hand, they are convinced that popular support for the protestors will swell greatly unless NATO is seen to be making every effort for a negotiated solution and the Alliance preserves its unity and credibility on the handling of East-West relations in general. In their public relations policy they will want to stress the disarmament motif for as long as possible and will not start expressly "preparing opinion for deployment" until either an intermediate solution is at hand or Soviet rigidity is seen to frustrate all progress.

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