

GRS 530

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AMENDED DISTN. 10/1/86.

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FM PARIS

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 132

OF 071708Z FEBRUARY 86

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, BONN, UKDEL NATO

PERSONAL FOR AMBASSADORS.

UK/FRENCH TALKS ON NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL: GORBACHEV'S PROPOSALS.

SUMMARY.

1. CONFIRMED THAT FRENCH ASSESSMENT OF GORBACHEV'S PROPOSALS ARE VERY CLOSE TO OUR OWN. THE FRENCH HANDED OVER IN CONFIDENCE A SUMMARY OF MITTERRAND'S PROPOSED REPLY TO GORBACHEV. THIS WILL NOT BE SENT BEFORE 12 FEBRUARY.

DETAIL.

2. IN BILATERAL TALKS TODAY THE FRENCH CONFIRMED THAT THEY WERE IN GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH THE ANALYSIS OF THE GORBACHEV DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN YOUR TELNOS 84 AND 85. GUELLUY (HEAD OF STRATEGIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT) PROMISED COMMENTS IN WRITING. HE SAID THAT:-

- (A) THE FRENCH VERY MUCH AGREED WITH US THAT GORBACHEV'S STRESS ON NUCLEAR FORCES WAS AIMED AT WEAKENING NATO'S POSITION, GIVEN THE CONVENTIONAL IMBALANCE.
- (B) ON INF, BOTH OF THE SOVIET APPROACHES CONTINUED TO INVOLVE COMPENSATION FOR BRITISH AND FRENCH NUCLEAR FORCES.
- (C) THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN THE SOVIET POSITION ON SDI.

3. THE FRENCH HANDED OVER A SYNOPSIS OF MITTERRAND'S REPLY TO GORBACHEV, WHICH WILL PROBABLY BE RELATIVELY SHORT. THIS EMPHASIZED THAT THE PROCESS OF DISARMAMENT SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO INCREASING SECURITY AND NOT REDUCING IT. GIVEN THE CONVENTIONAL AND CHEMICAL IMBALANCE IN EUROPE, NUCLEAR WEAPONS HAD GUARANTEED DETERRENCE AND THE OBJECTIVE OF ELIMINATING THEM WAS NOT REALISTIC. THE FRENCH HOPED THAT THE GENEVA NEGOTIATION COULD MAKE PROGRESS AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE PREVENTION OF NEW ARMS RACES, INCLUDING IN SPACE (THE REFERENCE TO SPACE IS DELIBERATELY KEPT BRIEF IN RESPONSE TO GORBACHEV'S ATTEMPT AT WEDGE-DRIVING ON SDI). THE FRENCH DID NOT TAKE PART IN THE GENEVA NEGOTIATION AND COULD NOT COMMENT ON THE DETAILS OF IT. IT WAS UNACCEPTABLE FOR FRENCH NUCLEAR FORCES TO BE INCLUDED. FRANCE, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT DUCK ITS RESPONSIBILITIES IF AND WHEN ITS THREE CONDITIONS WERE MET. A TEST BAN SHOULD BE A CONSEQUENCE OF A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION OF NUCLEAR ARSENALS, RATHER THAN A PRECONDITION AS THE RUSSIANS DEMANDED. FRANCE ATTACHED MUCH IMPORTANCE TO THE MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS ON A BAN ON CW PRODUCTION AND TO THE VIENNA CSCE REVIEW CONFERENCE. VERIFICATION PROBLEMS WERE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT.

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4. GUELLUY COMMENTED THAT TWO OTHER POINTS WOULD BE ADDED TO THE DRAFT: A REFERENCE TO THE ABM TREATY, AND TO DISARMAMENT/DEVELOPMENT. THE SYNOPSIS HAD BEEN CLEARED WITH THE ELYSEE, BUT THE REPLY WOULD NOT BE SENT UNTIL AFTER 12 FEBRUARY. IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE PRIME MINISTER AND MITTERRAND WOULD TOUCH ON THIS SUBJECT DURING THEIR MEETING AT CANTERBURY.

FRETWELL

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PS/PUS
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