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TO IMMEDIATE MODUK
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INFO IMMEDIATE FCO
INFO ROUTINE UKDEL NATO

SIC A2A

(FCO FOR PS, PS/MR RENTON, PS/PUS, GOODALL, PAKENHAM)
(UKDEL NATO (PERSONAL FOR AMBASSADOR)).
MY TELNO 2788, AND TELECONS CDS/HBDS AND DUS(P)/KERR: JCS VIEWS
ON THE REYKJAVIK PROPOSAL FOR THE ELIMINATION OF BALLISTIC
MISSILES

SUMMARY

1. FULL JCS STUDY NOW IN TRAIN. NO RESULTS EXPECTED BEFORE CAMP DAVID. SERIOUS JCS DOUBTS ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL. BUT OVERT DISSENT UNLIKELY IN THE SHORT TERM.

DETAIL

2. WE HAVE SPOKEN FURTHER IN JCS AND OSD ABOUT THE JCS STUDY ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE BALLISTIC MISSILES BY 1996. THE FACTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:-
- (A) THE JCS HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED ABOUT THE PROPOSAL BEFORE IT WAS TABLED IN REYKJAVIK.
 - (B) A PRELIMINARY JCS STUDY, REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT AT THE NSPG MEETING ON 27 OCTOBER (MY TELNO 2754), CONCLUDED THAT THE PROPOSAL COULD, IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, BE ACCEPTABLE, BUT RECOMMENDED FURTHER STUDY.
 - (C) A FULL STUDY WAS THEN COMMISSIONED AND IS NOW IN HAND, WITH A REPORT DUE BY THE END OF THE YEAR. IT WAS ENTRUSTED TO THE JCS QUOTE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE UNQUOTE: IE IT WILL NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT ONLY SERVICE VIEWS.
 - (D) THE INITIAL STUDY HAD BEEN A PURELY STATIC ANALYSIS OF TARGET COVERAGE (WITHOUT ICBMS/SLBMS) ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THERE WERE NO SOVIET ICBM SILOS TO HIT. BUT NO ACCOUNT WAS TAKEN OF POSSIBLE CHANGES IN TARGETTING PRIORITIES OR TACTICAL CONCEPTS, OR INDEED POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS IN AIR DEFENCE AND COUNTER-MEASURES
 - (E) IN THE LARGER STUDY NOW IN TRAIN THE ANALYSIS WOULD BE DYNAMIC, AND WOULD TAKE ACCOUNT OF POSSIBLE CHANGES IN AIR DEFENCES, INCREASED MANNING AND DEFENCE COSTS, AND THE POSITIONS OF THE NATO ALLIES. NO RESULTS WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR SOME TIME: KAMPELMAN'S SUGGESTION TO MR RENTON (FCO TELNO 1884) THAT THEY WOULD BE READY BEFORE CAMP DAVID IS QUITE WRONG.

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3. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT:-

- (A) THE JCS ARE WELL AWARE OF THE POLITICAL PRESSURES ON THEM, AS ILLUSTRATED BY WEINBERGER'S SUPERVISORY ROLE. BUT WEINBERGER'S STEER (SEE OUR TELNO 2788) MAY BE VERY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE WHITE HOUSE (SEE OUR TELNO 2768). BECAUSE OF THESE PRESSURES, KNOWLEDGE OF THE STUDIES IS BEING KEPT VERY CLOSE (AND THE CONTENTS OF THIS TELEGRAM SHOULD NOT BE QUOTED BACK TO US CONTACTS).
- (B) THE JCS HAVE, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, TO LIVE WITH THE PRESIDENT'S DECLARATORY POLICY. THEY WILL NOT PUBLICLY DISSENT FROM IT, BUT PRIVATELY THEY CLEARLY ARE SCEPTICAL AND CRITICAL OF THE PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE BALLISTIC MISSILES. THEY COULD LIVE WITH 50 PER CENT ACROSS-THE-BOARD START REDUCTIONS, AND WOULD HAVE PREFERRED THE PRESIDENT TO PROPOSE NO MORE THAN THAT. THEY SEE THE PRESENT STUDY AS A WAY OF AT LEAST BUYING TIME.
- (C) IT IS NOT CERTAIN THAT THE PRESENT STUDY WILL SATISFACTORILY COVER THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL FOR THE CONVENTIONAL (AND THEATRE NUCLEAR) BALANCE. BUT THE JCS ARE ALIVE TO THE IMPLICATIONS FOR CONVENTIONAL FORCES OF THE IDEA OF ELIMINATING BALLISTIC MISSILES.

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ORWBAN 7561

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PS
PS/MR RENTON
PS/PUS
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