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FM WASHINGTON

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 2930

OF 182352Z NOVEMBER 86

INFO PRIORITY BONN, PARIS, UKDEL NATO, MODUK

MY TELNOS 2920 - 2922: ARMS CONTROL: SPEECHES BY SHULTZ AND WEINBERGER

SUMMARY

1. IN THE EVENT, SHULTZ'S SPEECH GENERALLY PORTRAYED IN US PRESS AS RESPONSIVE TO EUROPEAN CONCERNS.

DETAIL

2. TODAY'S US PRESS COVERAGE OF SHULTZ'S SPEECH (WHICH IS NOT EXTENSIVE, GIVEN THE CONTINUING CONCENTRATION ON HIS VIEWS ON IRAN) HELPFULLY FOCUSES ON HIS SUGGESTION THAT, EVEN IF MOST BALLISTIC MISSILES HAD BEEN ELIMINATED, THE RETENTION OF SOME NUCLEAR BALLISTIC MISSILE FORCES, ON AN AGREED BASIS, MIGHT BE A NECESSARY INSURANCE. MOST REPORTS SUGGEST THAT THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO REASSURE THE ALLIES AND A RESPONSE TO EUROPEAN ANXIETIES POST-REYKJAVIK. BOTH THE WASHINGTON POST AND THE NEW YORK TIMES SUGGEST THAT SHULTZ'S SUGGESTION OWES SOMETHING TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT DURING WHICH, THE NEW YORK TIMES REPORTS, THE PRESIDENT AGREED NOT TO PRESS THE SOVIET UNION TO BAN ALL BALLISTIC MISSILES BY 1996 AS HE HAD PROPOSED AT REYKJAVIK.

3. THE PRESS ALSO NOTED THE PASSAGE IN SHULTZ'S SPEECH IN WHICH HE SAID THAT NUCLEAR WEAPONS SHOULD NOT BE REDUCED IF THIS WERE ONLY TO LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN THE RISKS OF CONVENTIONAL WAR OR OF POLITICAL INTIMIDATION THROUGH THE THREAT OF CONVENTIONAL ATTACK.

4. ONLY ONE NEWSPAPER (THE WASHINGTON TIMES) POINTS TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT SHULTZ'S SPEECH MIGHT QUOTE REKINDLE ALARM AMONGST NATO ALLIES UNQUOTE BY BRINGING TO THE FORE AGAIN THE US PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE ALL BALLISTIC MISSILES JUST WHEN THE ALLIES HAD BEGUN TO BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSAL HAD BEEN SHELVED.

5. THE ONLY MENTION OF WEINBERGER'S SPEECH IS IN THE WASHINGTON TIMES, WHICH NOTES WEINBERGER'S STATEMENT THAT THE US TRIDENT PROGRAMME WILL IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES BE ALTERED BEFORE THE UK TRIDENT MODERNISATION PROGRAMME IS COMPLETE, AND THAT ANY CHANGES IN NUCLEAR FORCES MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE OVERALL CONVENTIONAL BALANCE IN EUROPE.

COMMENT

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6. SO FAR, SO GOOD. WE SHALL BE WATCHING FOR FURTHER REPORTS OR EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THE TWO SPEECHES. BUT FIRST PRESS REACTION PAY MORE ATTENTION TO CONVERGENCE WITH THE IDEAS IN THE CAMP DAVID STATEMENT THAN TO REMAINING POINTS OF CONFLICT.

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