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UNCLASSIFIED  
DESKBY 292130Z  
FM UKDEL WILLIAMSBURG 292050Z MAY 83  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 007 OF 29 MAY

PLEASE ADVANCE FCO NEWS DEPT, OJD, NUMBER 10 AND COI.

ITEM : UK DENIES NEUTRON SHELL REQUEST.

BY JOHN BARROWS, LPS CHIEF ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT  
WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA (LPS): AN AMERICAN PRESS REPORT THAT  
BRITAIN HAS ASKED THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP A  
NEUTRON ARTILLERY SHELL FOR DEPLOYMENT IN EUROPE WAS STRONGLY  
DENIED BY A BRITISH SPOKESMAN TODAY 29 MAY.

AN OFFICIAL OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE, SPEAKING TO JOURNALISTS  
ATTENDING THE WESTERN ECONOMIC SUMMIT MEETING HERE, REBUTTED  
THE ARTICLE IN TODAY'S WASHINGTON POST WHICH MADE THE CLAIM.

'THERE HAS BEEN NO PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENHANCED  
RADIATION WEAPONS IN EUROPE. THE STORY THAT THE BRITISH  
GOVERNMENT HAS ASKED THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO PRODUCE A NEUTRON  
WEAPON SHELL HAS NO BASIS IN FACT,' HE DECLARED.

THE OFFICIAL SAID THE U.S. WEAPON DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME WAS,  
OF COURSE, ENTIRELY A MATTER FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. 'AS  
FAR AS DEPLOYMENT IS CONCERNED'. HE CONTINUED 'BRITAIN HAS  
NEITHER MADE NOR RECEIVED ANY REQUEST FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF  
ENHANCED RADIATION WARHEADS IN EUROPE.'

ASKED WHETHER THE NATO (NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION)  
COUNTRIES HAD NOT PUT FORWARD SUCH A PROPOSAL AS A JOINT VENTURE,  
THE OFFICIAL REPLIED THAT THEY HAD NOT.

'PART OF THE ROOT OF THE MISUNDERSTANDING IN THE ARTICLE IS  
PROBABLY BECAUSE THERE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSIONS IN NATO ABOUT A  
155 MILLIMETRE NON-NEUTRON NUCLEAR SHELL', HE ADDED.

SYNONYMOUSLY WITH THE BRITISH STATEMENT, FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE  
SEVEN SUMMIT COUNTRIES WERE HAVING A WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION ON  
ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AND CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE  
SOVIET UNION, PARTICULARLY ON INTERMEDIATE RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES IN  
EUROPE. A JOINT STATEMENT ON THESE ISSUES MAY BE ISSUED LATER BY THE  
SEVEN. (LPS)

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