

GR 1150

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM MOSCOW 151430Z JULY

TO PRIORITY F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 792 OF 15 JULY

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, UKDEL NATO, BONN, PARIS

INFO ROUTINE SOFIA, BELGRADE, BUCHAREST, BUDAPEST, EAST BERLIN, WARSAW AND PRAGUE.

INFO SAVING UKDEL MADRID, UKDIS GENEVA, UKMIS NEW YORK, TOKYO PEKING, ULAN BATOR, AND ALL OTHER NATO POSTS.

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY : US/SOVIET RELATIONS AND ARMS CONTROL :

MY TELNO 677 (NOT TO ALL)

SUMMARY.

1. THE RUSSIANS ARE PAINTING A BLACK PICTURE OF THE PROSPECTS FOR US/SOVIET RELATIONS. DESPITE WESTERN PRESS REPORTS TO THE CONTRARY, I SEE NO SIGNS HERE OF ANY SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN SUPER-POWER RELATIONS, WHICH THE RUSSIANS NOW VIEW ALMOST WHOLLY THROUGH THE PRISM OF INF.

INF.

2. MEANWHILE, THE AMERICANS ARE MAKING AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE RELATIONSHIP AT THE MARGINS AND IN THE PROCESS APPEAR TO BE JETTISONING RESTRAINTS INTRODUCED AFTER THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN.

3. THE ODDS ARE AGAINST A SUBSTANTIVE SHIFT IN THE SOVIET POSITION ON INF BEFORE DEPLOYMENT BEGINS, THOUGH SOME FURTHER LARGELY COSMETIC INITIATIVE IS NOT TO BE RULED OUT. THE SOVIET CALCULATION WILL BE THAT THEY STILL STAND A CHANCE OF ERODING ALLIANCE RESOLVE BEFORE DEPLOYMENT WITHOUT HAVING TO MODIFY THE SUBSTANCE OF THEIR POSITION.

DETAIL.

4. MY US COLLEAGUE TELLS ME THAT DURING THE VISIT LAST WEEK OF AN AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, LED BY CONGRESSMAN FOLEY, THE RUSSIANS GAVE NO HINT OF CHANGES IN THE SOVIET POSITION ON INF AND SHOWED LITTLE INTEREST IN A US/SOVIET

CONFIDENTIAL

/SUMMIT

CONFIDENTIAL

SUMMIT. FOLEY'S VISIT , AT THE INVITATION OF THE SUPREME SOVIET, WAS THE FIRST FORMAL US/SOVIET PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE FOR FOUR YEARS. FOLEY WAS WELL RECEIVED AND THE RUSSIANS DEPLOYED A HIGH-POWERED TEAM UNDER THE NOMINAL LEADERSHIP OF CANDIDATE POLITBUTO-MEMBER PONOMARYEV, WHICH INCLUDED THE DEPUTY-CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE ARMED FORCES, MARSHAL AKHROMEYEV. PONOMARYEV WAS POLITE BUT TOUCH. THE RUSSIANS WERE " SOMBERLY NEGATIVE " ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR US/SOVIET RELATIONS. THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION WAS STRONGLY CRITICISED . THE SOVIET SIDE PUT HEAVY EMPHASIS ON THE PLACE OF ARMS CONTROL IN BILATERAL RELATIONS

AND ON THE VIRTUES OF A FREEZE: THE LATTER WAS THE MAIN THEME OF PONOMARYEV'S TWO SPEECHES. PONOMARYEV ALSO TOLD THE CONGRESSMEN THAT IF DEPLOYMENT WENT AHEAD, THERE WOULD BE A BREAKDOWN ("SRIV") IN THE GENEVA TALKS. THIS REMARK WAS OMITTED FROM THE PUBLISHED TEXT OF HIS SPEECH , WHICH SUGGEST THAT HE WENT FURTHER THAN THE RUSSIANS NOW CONSIDER DESIRABLE FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION.

5. OUR OWN RECENT CONTACTS WITH SOVIET SOURCES (DETAILS

IN MEYER'S LETTER OF 13 JULY TO HEAD OF EESD) CONFIRM THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE NOW SENDING A DELIBERATELY BLEAK MESSAGE ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR US/ SOVIET AND EAST/WEST RELATIONS. THE ESSENCE OF THIS MESSAGE IS THAT :INF IS CENTRAL TO THE SUPER-POWER

RELATIONSHIP SEMICOLON DEPLOYMENT WILL QUALITATIEVELY CHANGE THE MILITARY/STRATEGIC BALANCE IN EUROPE TO THE SOVIET UNION'S DISADVANTAGE SEMICOLON US/SOVIET RELATIONS WILL SUFFER ACCORDINGLY SEMICOLON AND AN US/SOVIET SUMMIT IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE CAN BE RUVED OUT (THE GYERMANS HERE TELL US THAT THERE WAS NO CLEAR CUT RESPONSE BY THE RUSSIANS TO KOHL'S EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN A SUMMIT , AND MY HEAD OF CHANCERY WAS TOLD IN TERMS BY THE DEPUTY HEAD OF THE MFA'S AMERICAN DEPARTMENT ON 12 JULY THAT DEPLOYMENT WOULD RULE OUT A SUMMIT IN 1984. AGAINST THIS, AND NOT DISCOURAGED BY THE AMERICANS HERE , IT IS TRUE THAT SOME RUSSIANS ARE SAYING THAT RELATIONS WITH WASHINGTON COULD NOT BE WORSE AND HAVE EVEN SPOKEN OF AN UPTURN. BUT IT IS THE HARSH LINE WHICH PREDOMINATES.

6. OFFICIAL SOVIET CONTACTS HAVE ALSO SOUGHT TO PLAY DOWN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONSIDERABLE EFFORT NOW BEING MADE BY THE AMERICANS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS AT THE MARGIN. NEGOTIATIONS ARE TO RESUME SOON ON A CONSULAR AGREEMENT AND ON THAT PART OF THE CULTURAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENT WHICH COVERS MAJOR EXHIBITIONS. DISCUSSIONS ON BOTH HAVE BEEN IN SUSPENSE SINCE THE INVASTION OF AFGHANISTAN, AND , ACCORDING TO MY US COLLEAGUE, WASHINGTON'S DECISION TO PROCEED REPRESENTS A SHIFT IN POLICY. AN AMERICAN DELEGATION IS ALSO COMING TO MOSCOW TO DISCUSS CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES IN TIMES OF CRISIS. THE AIM WILL BE IN PART TO PURSUE REAGAN'S PROPOSALS ANNOUNCED IN MAY.

-2-
CONFIDENTIAL

/CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION .

CONFIDENTIAL

7. IN MY TUR, I CONCLUDED THAT THE RUSSIANS COULD BE BRACING THEMSELVES FOR A SUSTAINED PERIOD OF TRENCH WARFARE IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE AMERICANS. THE KOHL VISIT TO MOSCOW GAVE NO INDICATIONS OF NEW SOVIET POSITIONS ON ARMS CONTROL. IF SOVIET SIGNALS ARE TO BE TAKEN AT THEIR FACE VALUE, IT LOOKS THEREFORE AS IF THE RUSSIANS HAVE DECIDED TO STAND FIRM ON THEIR PRESENT POSITIONS AND TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT ADVANTAGES THEY CAN EXTRACT FROM THE BUNDESTAG DEBATE IN NOVEMBER ON INF, THE SUPPORT IN THE US CONGRESS FOR A FREEZE, THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN, AND , AS EVER, THE PEACE MOVEMENT. THEY MAY CALCULATE THAT A COMBINATION OF THESE FACTORS , AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF DARK SOVIET WARNINGS ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF DEPLOYMENT, MAY YET SUCCEED IN UNDERMINING NATO'S TWO-TRACK DECISION.

8. IT MAY BE THAT THE PRESENT SIGNALS CONSTITUTE AN EXAMPLE OF STANDARD SOVIET NEGOTIATING TACTICS WHICH WILL LEAD TO A VOLTE-FACE WHEN THE MOMENT OF TRUTH ARRIVES WITH THE IMMINENT DEPLOYMENT OF THE FIRST AMERICAN MISSILES. BUT I INCREASINLY DOUBT THAT WE SHALL SEE SUCH A SHIFT IN SOVIET POLICY THIS YEAR. TOO MUCH HAS BEEN INVESTED TOO PUBLICLY , AND BY ANDROPOV HIMSELF, IN THE PRESENT SOVIET POSITION TO ALLOW THE LEADERSHIP TO RETREAT WITH DIGNITY EITHER ON THE QUESTION OF COUNTING BRITISH AND FRENCH NUCLEAR SYSTEMS OR FROM OBJECTIONS TO REAGAN'S ZERO OPTION AND INTERMEDIATE SOLUTION. THE RUSSIANS WILL IN ANY CASE BE AWARE THAT THE END OF 1983 IS NOT AN ABSOLUTE DEADLINE : NATO DEPLOYMENT WILL NOT TAKE PLACE ALL AT ONCE , AND , EVEN AFTER DEPLOYMENT HAS BEGUN , THERE WILL STILL BE TIME TO TRY TO UNDERMINE IT BEFORE IT GOES TOO FAR OR TO NEGOTIATE REDUCTIONS.

9. THE RUSSIANS ARE NOW ALMOST CERTAINLY RESIGNED TO SOME MEASURE OF NATO INF DEPLOYMENT. IN THE CONVERSATION WITH MY HEAD OF CHANCERY REFERRED TO ABOVE, THE DEPUTY HEAD OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S AMERICAN DEPARTMENT PROBABLY GAVE AN HONEST VIEW WHEN HE SAID THAT HE DISCOUNTED A FORMAL INF AGREEMENT OR UNDERSTANDING BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. AT BEST, THOUGH HE THOUGHT THE ODDS WERE AGAINST IT , THERE MIGHT BE A SITUATION OF NO AGREEMENT AND NO DEPLOYMENT. THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE RUSSIANS MAY HAVE SOME FURTHER ESSENTIALLY PROPAGANDIST INITIATIVE UP THEIR SLEEVES WHICH WILL BE TIMED AS A LAST-DITCH ATTEMPT TO DELAY DEPLOYMENT.

9. FCO PLEASE PASS TO SAVING ADDRESSEES.

SUTHERLAND
FCO/WHITEHALL
DEF D

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

- 3 -
CONFIDENTIAL