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FM FCO 251630Z APR 84

TO IMMEDIATE THE HAGUE

TELEGRAM NUMBER 52 OF 25 APRIL

INFO IMMEDIATE TOKYO (FOR S OF S'S PARTY), WASHINGTON, BONN,  
BRUSSELS, ROME, UKDEL NATO

YOUR TELNO 142:

NETHERLANDS/INF

1. A MEETING OF THE SCG 'QUINT', MINUS THE NETHERLANDS, TOOK PLACE IN THE US NATO DELEGATION OFFICE IN BRUSSELS ON 25 APRIL UNDER US CHAIRMANSHIP (BURT). REPRESENTATIVES OF BELGIUM (DE LA BARRE), ITALY (DANOVI), FRG (HOLIK), AND UK (CARTLEDGE) ACCOMPANIED BY MOD OFFICIALS) ATTENDED. THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING, ARRANGED OVER THE EASTER HOLIDAY, WAS TO CONSIDER THE NETHERLANDS/INF PROBLEM AND WHAT, IF ANYTHING, THE OTHER BASING ALLIES CAN DO, EG THROUGH MEESAGES AT HEAD OF GOVERNMENT LEVEL, TO HELP IT TOWARDS AN ACCEPTABLE OUTCOME.

2. BURT GAVE AN ACCOUNT OF THE CONTACTS WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE BETWEEN THE US AND THE DUTCH (PRINCIPALLY VAN DER BROEK) IN RECENT WEEKS ON THIS ISSUE. VAN DER BROEK HAD MADE IT CLEAR, DURING HIS LAST VISIT TO WASHINGTON, THAT POLITICALLY THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY OF AN UNQUALIFIED DECISION BY THE DUTCH PARLIAMENT TO APPROVE THE BEGINNING OF CONSTRUCTION WORK AT WOENSDRECHT IN JUNE OR, EVEN, TO BEGIN BASE CONSTRUCTION WHILE POSTPONING GLCM DEPLOYMENT. ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES HAD BEEN CONSIDERED, NAMELY:-

(I) THE 'PACKAGE' APPROACH, COMBINING REDUCED GLCM DEPLOYMENT (EG FROM 48 TO 16), A REDUCTION IN DUTCH NUCLEAR TASKS (ARTILLERY, F16S) AND AN ALLIANCE ARMS CONTROL INITIATIVE (THE 'X + Y' PROPOSAL). US REACTIONS HAD BEEN NEGATIVE AND THE DUTCH SOON CONFESSED THAT A PACKAGE ON THESE LINES WOULD PROBABLY NOT TURN THE TRICK IN ANY CASE:

(II) THE 'CRISIS DEPLOYMENT' APPROACH, UNDER WHICH PARLIAMENT WOULD APPROVE A REDUCED CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE WITH THE PROVISIO THAT NO GLCMS WOULD BE DEPLOYED ON NETHERLANDS SOIL UNTIL A



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CRISIS OCCURRED WARRANTING THEIR TRANSFER TO THE NETHERLANDS FROM, EG BELGIUM, THE FRG OR US. THIS WAS THE OPTION CURRENTLY FAVOURED BY LUBBERS: THE US WAS STRONGLY OPPOSED:

(III) AGREEMENT BY THE NETHERLANDS THAT, ALTHOUGH NO GLCMS WOULD BE STATIONED ON DUTCH SOIL AT ANY TIME, BELGIUM AND FRG GLCMS COULD EXERCISE ON DUTCH TERRITORY AS A MATTER OF ROUTINE AND COULD BE OPERATIONALLY DEPLOYED IN THE NETHERLANDS IN THE EVENT OF A CRISIS.

(IV) THE SO-CALLED VAN MIERLO (FORMER DEFENCE MINISTER, MEMBER OF FIRST CHAMBER) OPTION BY WHICH A PARLIAMENTARY DECISION ON BOTH CONSTRUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT WOULD BE POSTPONED (EITHER INDEFINITELY OR UNTIL AFTER THE 1986 ELECTIONS) WHICH AT THE SAME TIME PARLIAMENT WOULD REMOVE THE NETHERLANDS RESERVE ON THE 1979 ALLIANCE DECISION.

(V) SIMPLE AND UNQUALIFIED POSTPONEMENT OF BOTH CONSTRUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT, AMOUNTING IN PRACTICE TO THE ABANDONMENT OF THE 1979 DECISION. THIS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY LEAD TO THE DEPARTURE OF THE LIBERALS (VVD) FROM THE COALITION AND TO VAN DER BROEK'S RESIGNATION.

THE AMERICANS HAD ADVISED THE DUTCH TO CONSULT THEIR ALLIES ON WHATEVER OPTION THEY DECIDED TO PURSUE (CURRENTLY (II) ABOVE) AND THE DUTCH WERE SENDING EMISSARIES TO BASING CAPITALS THIS WEEK. (BILATERAL MEETINGS HAVE ALREADY BEEN ARRANGED WITH THE UK - LATER TODAY - AND FRG).

3. IN DISCUSSION, DE LA BARRE (BELGIUM) STRESSED THAT ANY DUTCH DEROGATION FROM THE 1979 DECISION WOULD HAVE A CONSIDERABLE AND DAMAGING IMPACT IN BELGIUM: THE BROAD CONSENSUS WHICH BELGIAN GOVERNMENTS HAD ESTABLISHED COULD BEGIN TO UNRAVEL. AT THE SAME TIME, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT ALLIES SHOULD NOT REACT TO THE DUTCH PROBLEM IN A WAY WHICH COULD ALIENATE THE NETHERLANDS FROM THE ALLIANCE. DANOVI (ITALY) SAID THAT IT WAS UP TO BASING ALLIES TO SELECT THE LEAST DAMAGING OPTION FROM THE LIST IDENTIFIED BY THE US: HE THOUGHT THE VAN MIERLO APPROACH WOULD APPEAL TO ITALY MORE THAN THE OTHERS. IT WOULD BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO FIND A SOLUTION WHICH DID NOT OBLIGE THE VVD TO LEAVE THE COALITION, THUS OPENING THE WAY FOR THE SOCIALISTS TO ENTER GOVERNMENT.

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CARTLEDGE (UK) STRESSED THE OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF THE 1979 DECISION. LEADING MEMBERS OF THE VVD HAD RECENTLY ADOPTED COURAGEOUS PUBLIC POSITIONS: THE ALLIES SHOULD NOT UNDERCUT THEM BY ENCOURAGING INGENIOUS FORMULAE WHICH, EVEN IF THEY HELPED TO RESOLVE THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS, WOULD CUT OFF WHATEVER LONGER-TERM POSSIBILITY THERE MIGHT BE OF A GENUINELY SATISFACTORY DUTCH DECISION ON DEPLOYMENT. HE EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT TOO REGIMENTED AN ALLIANCE APPROACH, EG BY COORDINATED MESSAGES TO LUBBERS, TO THE DUTCH IN THE SHORT TERM: EACH BASING COUNTRY SHOULD DECIDE FOR ITSELF THE TERMS AND THE MEANS OF CONTACT MOST APPROPRIATE TO ITS BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. WHATEVER THE OUTCOME IN THE NETHERLANDS, THE ALLIANCE SHOULD NOT OVER-DRAMATISE IT. WE SHOULD SIMPLY DRAW ATTENTION TO THE LONG-STANDING NETHERLANDS RESERVE AND CALMLY EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT WISER COUNSELS WOULD IN DUE COURSE PREVAIL. HOLIK (FRG) FOLLOWED OTHERS IN STRONGLY OPPOSING THE 'CRISIS DEPLOYMENT' OPTION AND IN PREFERRING THE VAN MIERLO ALTERNATIVE.

4. SUMMING UP, BURT (US) SAID THAT A CLEAR CONSENSUS HAD EMERGED FROM THE DISCUSSION, WHICH COULD PERHAPS BE REFLECTED IN WHATEVER MESSAGES HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MIGHT DECIDE TO SEND TO THE DUTCH PRIME MINISTER, NAMELY:

(A) THE ABSOLUTE PRIORITY OF THE ALLIANCE SHOULD BE THE INTEGRITY OF THE 1979 DUAL-TRACK DECISION:

(B) ALLIES RECOGNISED THE ORIGINAL NETHERLANDS RESERVE AND WERE UNDERSTANDING AND SYMPATHETIC TOWARDS THE GOVERNMENT'S CURRENT DIFFICULTIES:

(C) IF THOSE DIFFICULTIES WERE SUCH AS TO PRECLUDE A POSITIVE DECISION NOW (UNDERLINED) TO IMPLEMENT THE DEPLOYMENT (AND HENCE CONSTRUCTION) TRACK, IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT ANY DELAY BE ACCOMPANIED BY A RE-AFFIRMATION OF DUTCH SUPPORT FOR THE 1979 DECISION IN PRINCIPLE:

(D) THE DUTCH SHOULD BE URGED TO MAINTAIN THE PROCESS OF CONSULTATION WITH BASING ALLIES ON THE DEPLOYMENT ISSUE.

5. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT IT WOULD BE BOTH IMPROPER AND COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE FOR ALLIES TO BE TOO SPECIFIC IN THEIR ADVICE TO THE DUTCH ABOUT POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS: BUT, EQUALLY, THE



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GENERAL PROPOSITIONS IN PARA 4 ABOVE SHOULD BE IMPRESSED ON THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY POSSIBLE. IT WAS ALSO ARGUED, PARTICULARLY BY THE ITALIANS WITH US SUPPORT, THAT CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO MEANS OF CONVEYING TO THE VVD THE HOPE OF SYMPATHETIC ALLIED GOVERNMENTS THAT THEY WOULD FIND IT POSSIBLE TO REMAIN IN THE COALITION.

6. THE RECOMMENDATION IN YOUR REFTTEL FOR A MINISTERIAL MESSAGE IS STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION HERE.

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