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FM THE HAGUE 171620Z MAY 84

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 175 OF 17 MAY

AND TO PRIORITY MODUK (DS17), UKDEL NATO, WASHINGTON, BONIN, BRUSSELS,
ROME .

MY TELNO. 173 : NETHERLANDS / INF

SUMMARY

1. THE VVD, IN PARALLEL WITH VAN DEN BROEK, HAVE BEEN STEPPING UP PRESSURE IN THE FACE OF FURTHER DUBIOUS CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT IDEAS.

DETAIL

2. NIJPELS, THE LEADER OF THE VVD FRACTIE, CALLED ON ME THIS AFTERNOON AT HIS REQUEST. HE WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED BY MR. HESELTINE'S COMMENTS IN BRUSSELS YESTERDAY ABOUT THE NEED FOR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE NETHERLANDS ON THIS ISSUE. HE WILL UNDERLINE THIS THEME IN A TELEVISION INTERVIEW HE IS GIVING TOMORROW.

3. NIJPELS CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD HAD LONG DISCUSSIONS WITH LUBBERS SINCE THE LATTER'S RETURN FROM SAUDI ARABIA (PARA. 6 OF MY TELNO. 163). IN HIS VIEW, LUBBERS IS STILL THINKING IN TERMS OF SOLUTION THAT COULD AT BEST BE REGARDED AS A VERY TENUOUS YES THAT IS NEGATED BY ILLOGICAL CONDITIONS. (HE WILL NOT HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE BAD CDA RESULTS IN YESTERDAYS' MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN ROTTERDAM) NIJPELS CONFIRMED THAT THE CDA PLAN TO DEFER ACTUAL DEPLOYMENT UNTIL 1988 DID NOT INCLUDE A DECISION NOW TO DEPLOY IN PRINCIPLE. HE BELIEVES THAT AN EVEN MORE BIZARRE PLAN ATTRIBUTED TO DE VRIES, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT FRACTIE LEADER, INVOLVES SOME BUILDING WORK FOR 32 MISSILES : INSISTENCE ON REOPENING OFF US/USSR ARMS NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA : A NATO AGREEMENT TO FLY IN MISSILES UNTIL RESULTS ARE ACHIEVED AT GENEVA : AND A DECISION NOT TO DEPLOY IF RESULTS ARE NOT , REPEAT NOT, ACHIEVED AT GENEVA.

4. A FEW DAYS AGO VAN DEN BROEK SENT LUBBERS A MODIFIED VERSION OF THE VVD PLAN (MY TELELETTER OF 27 APRIL TO CARTLEDGE).. HE RECEIVED A WRITTEN 9 - PAGE REPLY WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT A GOVERNMENT CRISIS LOOKED INCREASINGLY LIKELY. ACCORDING TO NIJPELS IF, AS IS PROBABLE, THE RESTRICTED GROUP OF MINISTERS (THE PENTAGIJS) CANNOT REACH AGREEMENT ON A SOLUTION IN THE NEXT WEEK OR TWO, VAN DEN BROEK WILL INSIST ON PUTTING HIS PLAN OR SOMETHING LIKE IT TO THE FULL CABINET. THE VVD MINISTERS WILL BACK IT AND WOULD BE READY TO JOIN HIM IF HE FELT HE HAD TO RESIGN. BUT IT IS

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/ PROBABLY

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PROBABLY TRUE THAT THE WHOLE CABINET WILL BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT RATHER MORE THAN THE PENTAGONS SO FAR, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE LATEST OPINION POLL SHOWS A MAJORITY OF CDA VOTES IN FAVOUR OF DEPLOYMENT.

5. NIJPELS HAS ADVISED THE AMERICANS HERE TO LIE LOW FOR THE TIME BEING. HE BELIEVES THAT LUBBERS WOULD LIKE TO PROVOKE THEM INTO SOME OVER-DRAMATIC PRESSURE. IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE HELPFUL BRUSSELS NATO MEETING, I THINK WE SHOULD KEEP FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A PRIME MINISTERIAL MESSAGE IN RESERVE FOR THE TIME BEING. } ||

6. LUBBERS HAS ALWAYS BEEN OPPOSED TO AN UNCONDITIONAL YES. THE NEXT STAGE IS FOR HIM TO BECOME CONVINCED THAT THE KIND OF CONDITIONAL NO WHICH HE HAS APPARENTLY BEEN CONTEMPLATING WILL NOT SECURE THE SURVIVAL OF HIS GOVERNMENT. THE MAIN PRESSURE TO THIS END HAS TO BE DOMESTIC. BIG BUSINESS HAVE BEEN TELLING LUBBERS THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S CREDIBILITY WILL BE FATALLY UNDERMINED IF IT DOES NOT GRASP THIS NETTLE SATISFACTORILY. IF AND WHEN IT SHOWS SIGNS OF HAVING THE RIGHT EFFECT, THERE MAY BE FURTHER SCOPE FOR OUTSIDE PRESSURE.

MANSFIELD

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NEWS D

INFO D

PS

PS/MR LUCE

PS/PUS

SIR J BULLARD

MR JENKINS

MR CARTLEDGE

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