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FM WASHINGTON 280158Z FEB 85
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 714 OF 27 FEBRUARY

INFO CANBERRA WELLINGTON UKDEL NATO MODUK (FOR SECRETARY (O)(C)
AND SECRETARY (N)(S)

MY TELNO 673: NEW ZEALAND/US RELATIONS

SUMMARY

1. LANGE'S MEETING WITH BROWN (STATE DEPARTMENT) A SLANGING-MATCH. LANGE FIRM THAT THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE IN NEW ZEALAND'S POLICY ON SHIP VISITS: THAT HE WISHED TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US: AND THAT NEW ZEALAND WOULD NOT CURTAIL ITS OWN DEFENCE EFFORTS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC AND SOUTH EAST ASIA.

DETAIL

2. THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE GIVEN US AN ACCOUNT OF DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY BROWN'S MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER LANGE IN LOS ANGELES ON 26 FEBRUARY, AND OF THEIR MEETING WITH MR TIM FRANCIS, NEW ZEALAND DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, IN WASHINGTON ON 27 FEBRUARY.

3. LANGE, WITH AMBASSADOR ROWLING SITTING BESIDE HIM, HAD BEGUN BY DENYING ALL THE NEGOTIATING HISTORY OF THE LAST 6 MONTHS. HE SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY HAD SINCE 1982 CONSISTENTLY OPPOSED ALLOWING NUCLEAR WEAPONS INTO NEW ZEALAND. US STATEMENTS DURING THE 1984 ELECTION CAMPAIGN HAD FORCED HIM TO ACCEPT THE LABOUR PARTY'S POLICY OF OPPOSING NUCLEAR-POWERED SHIP VISITS AS WELL. THE STATEMENT ON SHIP VISITS IN THE 1984 ANZUS COMMUNIQUE HAD BEEN MADE BY A MORIBUND GOVERNMENT AND WAS A QUOTE ZOMBIE UNQUOTE WHICH THE US HAD REPEATEDLY TRIED TO RESURRECT. HE DENIED THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF HIS GOVERNMENT HAD EVER INDICATED THAT THEY MIGHT CHANGE THEIR POLICY: THIS HAD BEEN A FIGMENT OF AMERICAN IMAGINATION. THE STATE DEPARTMENT MAINTAIN THAT SUCH INDICATIONS HAD BEEN GIVEN BY THE FORMER NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADOR, BY SENIOR NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE OFFICIALS, AND BY LANGE HIMSELF, TALKING TO THE US AMBASSADOR IN WELLINGTON.

4. LANGE TOOK THE LINE THAT NEW ZEALAND WANTED TO REMAIN IN ANZUS BUT BELIEVED THE ALLIANCE SHOULD RELY ON CONVENTIONAL DEFENCE. THE DISPROPORTIONATE US RESPONSE WAS PUSHING NEW ZEALAND IN OTHER DIRECTIONS. THE US WAS TRYING TO CHANGE THE CLIMATE IN NEW ZEALAND AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT, AND TO PUNISH AND QUOTE DESTABILISE UNQUOTE NEW ZEALAND (HE MADE A COMPARISON WITH NICARAGUA). BROWN DENIED THIS, AND OUTLINED THE MEASURES REPORTED IN MY TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE. LANGE SAID HE WOULD RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO MAKE POLITICAL CAPITAL OUT OF US'S TREATMENT OF NEW ZEALAND. HE PREFERRED TO STRESS POINTS OF COMMON INTEREST AND THE NEED FOR

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GOOD RELATIONS. BROWN TAXED HIM WITH STATEMENTS BY KNOX, THE LEADER OF THE NEW ZEALAND FEDERATION OF LABOUR, IN TASHKENT ON 22 FEBRUARY, IN WHICH HE SUPPORTED SOVIET PEACE INITIATIVES, AND THE SOVIET LINE ON THE VICTORY OVER FASCISM AND THE THREAT TO THE WORLD FROM US IMPERIALISM. LANGE DISSOCIATED HIMSELF FROM THIS, AND REMINDED BROWN THAT HE HAD PROTESTED TO THE SOVIET UNION AGAINST THEIR ATTEMPTS TO CAPITALISE ON THE ANZUS ROW.

5. BROWN THEN ASKED ABOUT LANGE'S ATTITUDE TO THE SOVIET THREAT IN THE PACIFIC. LANGE CONCEDED THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD PROVIDED SOME INTERESTING INTELLIGENCE ON THIS, BUT SAID THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN OF OPERATIONAL IMPORTANCE. HE WOULD NOW HAVE MORE TIME FOR CROSSWORD PUZZLES. HE UNDERSTOOD THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CAM RAHN BAY, AND THE US ATTITUDE TOWARDS DETERRENCE, BUT NEW ZEALAND WAS NOT PART OF THE AMERICAN COMMAND STRUCTURE, NOR A FRONTIER STATE. HE ASSERTED THAT US/NEW ZEALAND LINKS WERE IN FACT VERY WEAK, BUT THAT HE WAS DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING THEM. IT WAS THE UNITED STATES, RATHER THAN NEW ZEALAND, WHICH WAS SHIRKING ITS RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC. NEW ZEALAND WOULD EXPAND ITS EFFORTS QUOTE TO MAKE UP FOR REDUCTION OF BRITISH AID UNQUOTE AND WOULD NOT WITHDRAW FROM SINGAPORE OR MALAYSIA. THEY WOULD ALSO MAINTAIN THEIR FORCE IN SINAI FOR AS LONG AS THE AUSTRALIANS DID.

6. IN WASHINGTON, FRANCIS HAD REPEATED LANGE'S POSITION ON SHIP VISITS BUT HAD MADE SOME EFFORT TO STRESS MUTUAL AND TRADITIONAL TIES, AND HAD ASKED THE ADMINISTRATION TO RESTRAIN CONGRESS.

7. THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAY THAT BOTH LANGE AND FRANCIS WERE TOLD THAT THE US MEASURES WOULD BE REVERSIBLE WHENEVER THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT REVERSED ITS OWN POSITION.

8. THE STATE DEPARTMENT THOUGHT THAT DESPITE THE FIREWORKS LANGE'S OVERALL APPROACH WOULD BE TO TRY TO LIMIT THE DAMAGE. THE US WOULD STICK TO THE HIGH GROUND OF ITS POSITION ON ALLIANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

THE ADMINISTRATION WAS NOT OF COURSE TRYING TO DESTABLISE LANGE'S GOVERNMENT. THEY WERE PREPARED TO DO BUSINESS WITH HIM IF HE RECATED THOUGH THEY DID NOT EXPECT HIM TO DO SO SOON. BY THE SUMMER, HOWEVER, WHEN THE MEASURES WOULD HAVE WORKED THROUGH AND RELATIONS WOULD BE MORE DISTANT, THERE MIGHT BE A NEW IMPETUS IN NEW ZEALAND FOR THE RESTORATION OF GOOD RELATIONS.

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9. STATE ARE GRATEFUL TO THE PRIME MINISTER FOR HER FIRM PUBLIC SUPPORT, AND HOPE SHE MAY BE ABLE TO GET ACROSS TO MR LANGE IN LONDON THAT THE DOOR IS OPEN FOR NEW ZEALAND TO RETURN, AND THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO WESTERN SOLIDARITY IF HE WERE TO RECONSIDER HIS POSITION.

WRIGHT

US DEFENCE RELATIONS WITH NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA

LIMITED

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DEFENCE D
SPD
NAD
NEWS D
PLANNING STAFF
ECD(E)
TRED
PUSD

PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR LUCE
PS/PUS
MR GOODALL
MR WESTON
SIR W HARDING
MR WILSON
MR DEREK THOMAS
MR DAVID THOMAS
MR BRAITHWAITE
MR MAUD

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