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TELEGRAM NUMBER 132 OF 14 JANUARY 1981


INFO PARIS BONN UKDEL NATO MOSCOW CAIRO (FOR PS/S OF S)

INFO SAVING ANKARA LISBON OTTAWA OSLO REYKJAVIK UKMIS NEW YORK
ATHENS BRUSSELS COPENHAGEN DUBLIN ROME LUXEMBOURG THE HAGUE UKREP
BRUSSELS*To glance.*MY TELNO 119: CONFIRMATION HEARINGS ON ALEXANDER HAIG 

1. THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE YESTERDAY TURNED ITS ATTENTION TO HAIG'S ROLE DURING HIS PERIODS OF SERVICE AT THE WHITE HOUSE. HE WAS SUBJECTED TO CLOSE QUESTIONING FROM SENATORS SARBANES (D MARYLAND), AND TSONGAS (D MASSACHUSETTS) ABOUT HIS VIEWS ON THE BOMBING OF CAMBODIA, HIS ROLE IN OPERATIONS AGAINST THE ALLENDE GOVERNMENT IN CHILE, HIS JUDGEMENT ABOUT WIRE-TAPPING INCIDENTS UNDER KISSINGER AND ABOUT WATERGATE.

2. HAIG DEFENDED THE BOMBING OF CAMBODIA ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SELF-DEFEATING TO PERMIT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TO ENJOY SANCTUARY IN CAMBODIA. THE BOMBING WAS NEITHER IMMORAL NOR AN ABUSE OF POWER. HE DEFENDED HIS ROLE IN RESPECT OF CHILE AND THE WIRE-TAPPING ALLEGATIONS ON THE GROUNDS THAT, IN THE FIRST CASE, HE WAS SIMPLY A CHANNEL FOR PASSING REPORTS AND, IN THE SECOND, THAT HE MERELY CARRIED OUT INSTRUCTIONS, HAVING SOUGHT ASSURANCES THAT THE DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE PRESIDENT, THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE FBI CONFORMED TO STANDARD PROCEDURES

3. WHEN THE COMMITTEE TURNED TO WATERGATE THE EXCHANGES BECAME TENSE AND TESTY WITH SARBANES (WHO MADE HIS NAME IN THE NIXON IMPEACHMENT HEARINGS) REPEATEDLY TRYING TO EXTRACT FROM HAIG QUOTE A VALUE JUDGEMENT UNQUOTE ABOUT THE WATERGATE PERIOD. HAIG COMPARED THE WATERGATE PERIOD TO THE WORST OF THE MCCARTHY ERA, SAYING THAT IT WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST TRAGEDIES THAT HAD BEFALLEN THE UNITED STATES AND THAT UNDOUBTEDLY MISTAKES HAD BEEN MADE QUOTE ON BOTH SIDES UNQUOTE. HE HAD TRIED TO DO HIS BEST, IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES HE HAD INHERITED, TO KEEP THE COUNTRY ON AN EVEN KEEL TO THE DEGREE THAT HIS AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES PROVIDED. HE HAD NEVER WILLINGLY, CONSCIOUSLY OR UNCONSCIOUSLY PARTICIPATED IN AN ACT WHICH HE CONSIDERED TO BE IMMORAL AND, ABOVE ALL, ILLEGAL. HIS VOICE RISING WITH ANGER AND EMOTION, HAIG SAID THAT HE HAD NEVER PARTICIPATED IN ANYTHING THAT WAS WRONG OR ILLEGAL IN 37 YEARS OF MILITARY SERVICE TO HIS COUNTRY. NOBODY HAD A MONOPOLY ON VIRTUE, QUOTE NOT EVEN YOU SENATOR UNQUOTE.

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4. LATER, PROBABLY REALISING THAT HE HAD ANTAGONISED MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE BY HIS EVASIVE AND HOSTILE MANNER, HAIG MADE A FORMAL STATEMENT SAYING THAT DURING THE WATERGATE PERIOD ACTIONS HAD BEEN COMMITTED WHICH WERE IMPROPER, ILLEGAL AND IMMORAL. HE COULD NOT BRING HIMSELF TO RENDER JUDGEMENT ON PRESIDENT NIXON OR HENRY KISSINGER FOR WHOM HE HAD WORKED INTIMATELY BUT HE ASSURED THE COMMITTEE THAT AS SECRETARY OF STATE IT WOULD BE HIS FIRM INTENTION TO FULFIL HIS RESPONSIBILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW AND THE CONSTITUTION.

5. QUESTIONS TO HAIG ARE CONTINUING TODAY AND THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE WILL NOT NOW VOTE ON HAIG'S NOMINATION UNTIL THURSDAY MORNING 15 JANUARY AT THE EARLIEST. THE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP HAD HOPED TO HAVE HAIG CONFIRMED BY VOTE OF THE FULL SENATE ON THE AFTERNOON OF 20 JANUARY IE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER REAGAN'S INAUGURATION. THIS TIMING MAY SLIP. IF SO, DAVID NEWSOM (THE CURRENT UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS) WILL BE ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE FOR A DAY OR TWO. HAIG'S CONFIRMATION ITSELF IS NOT IN DOUBT.

FCO PSE PASS SAVING TO: OTTAWA, OSLO, ANKARA, LISBON, REYKJAVIK, ATHENS, BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN, DUBLIN, ROME, LUXEMBOURG, THE HAGUE, UKREP BRUSSELS.

HENDERSON

*FCO/WH-FEHALL
NAD.*

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WAS NOT
ADVANCED

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

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