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TO IMMEDIATE NEW DELHI

TELEGRAM NUMBER 828 OF 22 NOVEMBER

FOLLOWING FOR PS/P.M. AND PS/SECRETARY OF STATE

COLE'S LETTER OF 18 NOVEMBER TO BONE : CANADIAN PROPOSALS ON
ARMS CONTROL.


1. IN HIS MESSAGE TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF 18 NOVEMBER, MR TRUDEAU PROPOSED THAT ALL NATO MEMBERS SHOULD BE REPRESENTED AT A QUOTE HIGH POLITICAL LEVEL UNQUOTE AT THE OPENING SESSION OF CDE ON 17 JANUARY. THIS REPLACED HIS EARLIER MORE SPECIFIC CALL FOR ATTENDANCE BY HEADS OF GOVERNMENT. OUR ADVICE ON THE QUESTION ON ATTENDANCE BY MINISTERS AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE CDE REMAINS THAT IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE TO START OFF THE CDE AT HEADS OF GOVERNMENT LEVEL AND THAT IT WOULD BE POSITIVELY DAMAGING TO ALLIANCE UNITY TO ATTEMPT TO DO SO. AS FOR ATTENDANCE AT FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL, THE UK POSITION IS THAT WE WILL BE REPRESENTED AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL AT THE OPENING CEREMONY, BUT THE FOREIGN SECRETARY HAS NOT COMMITTED HIMSELF PERSONALLY AND WOULD PREFER THIS DECISION TO BE TAKEN ON THE BASIS OF FURTHER DISCUSSION IN NATO WHEN WE SEE WHETHER SHULTZ CAN BE PERSUADED TO ATTEND.

2. MR TRUDEAU ALSO ARGUED THAT NATO SHOULD RESPOND EARLY NEXT YEAR TO THE EAST'S LATEST MBFR PROPOSALS AND BE PREPARED TO FOLLOW THIS UP WITH A MEETING IN VIENNA AT FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL. THE LATEST EASTERN POSITIONS IN VIENNA REPRESENT SOME ADVANCE IN THEIR APPROACH TO THE VERIFICATION AND MONITORING MEASURES WHICH WOULD BE REQUIRED IN AN MBFR AGREEMENT. BUT THEY ARE AS ADAMANT AS EVER IN REFUSING THE WESTERN DEMAND FOR PRIOR ACCORD ON EXISTING FORCE LEVELS BEFORE ANY COMMITMENTS ARE FORMALLY UNDERTAKEN. (THE EAST HAS AN UNACKNOWLEDGED NUMERICAL ADVANTAGE OF 200,000 MEN IN THE MBFR AREA). THE SCOPE FOR A BREAKTHROUGH IS THUS NEGLIGIBLE, UNLESS THE WEST WERE PREPARED TO ABANDON A KEY NEGOTIATING PRINCIPLE AND MAKE A LEAP OF FAITH RELYING MERELY ON EASTERN GOOD INTENTIONS. WE DO NOT CONSIDER THERE IS ANY EVIDENCE TO JUSTIFY THIS. THEREFORE, WHILE A RESPONSE TO LATEST EASTERN POSITIONS IS CERTAINLY DESIRABLE ON VERIFICATION (AND THE UK WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THIS WITHIN NATO) AND A WIDER EVALUATION OF THE WESTERN APPROACH TO MBFR WOULD ALSO BE TIMELY IN BRUSSELS, WE SEE NO CASE FOR RECOMMENDING A MEETING IN VIENNA AT FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL. THIS COULD ONLY GIVE RISE TO POLITICAL EXPECTATIONS WHICH THERE IS LITTLE PROSPECT OF SATISFYING ON THE BASIS OF DECLARED AND LONG-STANDING WESTERN NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVES.

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	Classification and Caveats	Precedence/Deskby
	CONFIDENTIAL	IMMEDIATE

ZCZC	1	ZCZC
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CLASS	3	CONFIDENTIAL
CAVEATS	4	
DESKBY	5	
FM FCO	6	FM FCO 22 2 NOV 83
PRE/ADD	7	TO IMMEDIATE NEW DELHI FOR CHOGM DELEGATION
TEL NO	8	TELEGRAM NUMBER
	9	FOLLOWING FOR PRIME MINISTER'S PS/P.M. and PS/Secretary of State
	10	COLE'S LETTER OF 18 NOVEMBER TO BONE : CANADIAN PROPOSALS ON
	11	ARMS CONTROL.
	12	I. In his message to the Prime Minister of 18 November, Mr
	13	Trudeau proposed that all NATO members should be represented at
	14	a quote high political level unquote at the opening session of
	15	CDE on 17 January. This replaced his earlier more specific
	16	call for attendance by Heads of Government. Our advice on the
	17	question on attendance by Ministers at the opening session of the
	18	CDE remains that it would not be appropriate to start off the CDE
	19	at Heads of Government level and that it would be positively dam-
	20	aging to Alliance unity to attempt to do so. As for attendance
	21	at Foreign Minister level, the UK position is that we will be
///	22	represented at Ministerial level at the opening ceremony, but
//	23	the Foreign Secretary has not committed himself personally and
/	24	would prefer this decision to be taken on the basis of further
	25	discussion in NATO when we see whether Shultz can be persuaded

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22/11

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Authorised for despatch	<i>[Signature]</i>		
Comcen reference	Time of despatch		

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

	Classification and Caveats	IMMEDIATE	Page
	CONFIDENTIAL		2

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 to attend.
 2. Mr Trudeau also argued that NATO should respond early next year to the East's latest MBFR proposals and be prepared to follow this up with a meeting in Vienna at Foreign Minister Level. The latest Eastern positions ~~advanced~~ ^{VER} in Vienna represent some advance in their approach to the ~~verification~~ ^U and monitoring measures which would be required in an MBFR agreement. But they are as adamant as ever in refusing the Western demand for prior accord on existing force levels before any commitments are formally undertaken. (The East has an unacknowledged numerical advantage of 200,000 men in the MBFR area). The scope for a breakthrough is thus negligible, unless the West were prepared to abandon a key negotiating principle and make a leap of faith relying merely on Eastern good intentions. We do not consider there is any evidence to justify this. Therefore, while a response to latest Eastern positions is certainly desirable on verification (and the UK will contribute to this within NATO) and a wider evaluation of the Western approach to MBFR would also be timely in Brussels, we see no case ^{This} for recommending a meeting in Vienna at Foreign Minister level, ~~which~~ could only give rise to political expectations which there is little prospect of satisfying on the basis of declared and long-standing Western negotiating objectives.

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