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TOP SECRET
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TO FLASH FCO
TELNO 1185
OF 160900Z SEPTEMBER 85

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FOR LLEWELLYN-SMITH, HEAD OF SOVIET DEPT.

YOUR TELNO 889:

COUNTER RETALIATION AGAINST MOSCOW EXPULSIONS

1. I AM NATURALLY DISAPPOINTED THAT MINISTERS HAVE FELT UNABLE TO ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATION IN MY TELNO 1180. THAT TELEGRAM STILL REPRESENTS MY CONSIDERED AND INDEED RECONSIDERED VIEW AND REPRESENTS ONE "ALTERNATIVE COURSE" ON WHICH PARA 3 OF YTUR INVITES BY VILWS. TO THE ARGUMENTS WHICH IT CONTAINS, AS SUPPLEMENTED BY MY TELNO 1182, I CAN ADD BY WAY OF AMPLIFICATION ONLY TWO ADAGES. FIRST FROM THE POKER TABLE: "ALWAYS QUIT WHEN YOU ARE AHEAD" AND THE SECOND COINED BY LORD BRIMLOW WHEN FACED WITH A SIMILAR SITUATION WHILE SERVING AS MINISTER AT THIS EMBASSY: "NEVER ENGAGE IN A PISSING MATCH WITH A SKUNK: HE POSSESSES IMPORTANT NATURAL ADVANTAGES". I NEVERTHELESS FULLY APPRECIATE, OF COURSE, THAT THERE ARE POLITICAL FACTORS IN THE EQUATION WHICH I CANNOT ACCURATELY ASSESS FROM HERE AND ON WHICH IT IS NOT IN ANY CASE MY BUSINESS TO COMMENT.

AS ON THE UNPALATABLE CHOICE BETWEEN OPTIONS SET OUT IN YOUR I HAVE
THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS. THE FIRST ISSUE TO ADDRESS IS THAT OF THE
RELATIVE MERITS AND DE-MERITS OF SIX OR SEVEN (RATHER THAN FOUR)
FURTHER EXPULSIONS FROM LONDON: AND THE IMPOSITION OF NEW TRAVEL
RESTRICTIONS ON SOVIET OFFICIALS IN LONDON. MY VERY RELUCTANT
CONCLUSION IS THAT WE SHOULD GO FOR THE FORMER RATHER THAN FOR THE
LATTER. ONCE AGAIN I AM TRYING TO LOOK AHEAD TO THE TIME, PROBABLY
ABOUT ONE YEAR HENCE, WHEN OUR RELATIONS BEGIN TO RETURN TO
SOMETHING APPROACHING NORMALITY. GIVEN THE COOPERATION FROM POD
AND FROM THE GUARDIANS OF THE PURSE WHICH WILL, I TRUST, BE
FORTHCOMING WE CAN EXPECT TO BUILD UP THE SURVIVING RUMP OF THIS
EMBASSY, OVER A YEAR, INTO SOMETHING LIKE A GOING CONCERN. A
REVISED TRAVEL REGIME, HOWEVER, WOULD BE QUITE ANOTHER MATTER.
HOWEVER CONCLUSIVELY TRIGONOMETRY MAY PROVE THAT A REVISED REGIME
IN LONDON EQUATED TO THE EXISTING REGIME IN MOSCOW THE RUSSIANS
WOULD TAKE A DIFFERENT VIEW. THEY WOULD CERTAINLY RETALIATE IN KIND
AND ARE FORMIDABLY WELL EQUIPPED TO ENFORCE DISCRIMINATORY
RESTRICTIONS (AS, INCIDENTALLY, WE IN LONDON ARE NOT). THE RESULT
WOULD BE, AS I HAVE POINTED OUT MORE THAN ONCE IN OUR EARLIER
EXCHANGES, THAT THE
ALREADY MINIMAL POSSIBILITIES FOR LOCAL RECREATION FOR OUR
REMAINING EMBASSY STAFF WOULD SUFFER SERIOUS DAMAGE. THE KEY POINT,
HOWEVER, IS THAT OUR RESTRICTIONS, AND SOVIET COUNTER-RESTRICTIONS,
WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY REMAIN IN PLACE EVEN WHEN OUR RELATIONS
RETURN TO NORMAL: I CANNOT IMAGINE ANY CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE
SECURITY SERVICES MIGHT BE PERSUADED TO ABANDON OR RELAX OUR
REVISED REGIME ONCE IT HAD BEEN PUT INTO OPERATION. WE SHOULD BE
STUCK WITH IT. GIVEN THAT WE ARE APPARENTLY TO LOSE FOUR ADDITIONAL
MEMBERS OF OUR STAFF, THROUGH SOVIET COUNTER-RETALIATION TO OUR
COUNTER-RETALIATION, I SHOULD BE PREPARED TO SEE THIS FIGURE RISE
BY A FURTHER TWO (I HOPE WE CAN HOLD IT TO THAT) RATHER THAN LOSE
FOUR STAFF AND ADDITIONALLY SUFFER THE PERMANENT INCUBUS OF A
DISCRIMINATORY TRAVEL REGIME HERE WHICH WOULD EFFECTIVELY CONFINE
OUR STAFF TO THE CITY OF MOSCOW - AN ENVIRONMENT FROM WHICH, AS
YOU WILL KNOW, IT IS DESIRABLE IF NOT ESSENTIAL TO ESCAPE FROM
TIME TO TIME.

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3. THIS RECOMMENDATION IS, HOWEVER, SUBJECT TO SOME IMPORTANT
CAVEATS WHICH I SET OUT BELOW.

4. IT WILL NOT HAVE ESCAPED YOU THAT SOVIET TARGETTING IN THEIR
CHOICE OF EXPELLEES FROM THIS EMBASSY HAS BEEN REMARKABLY PRECISE,
PARTICULARLY AGAINST CHANCERY AND MOST NOTABLY AGAINST OUR
TECHNICAL STAFF. IT HAS ALSO BEEN SPITEFUL - WITNESS THE CHOICE
OF STAFF MEMBERS OF WORKING SPOUSES (MY TELNO 1177) WHICH
HAS GIVEN THE RUSSIANS IN AT LEAST FOUR CASES TWO EXPULSIONS FOR
THE PRICE OF ONE. WE MUST EXPECT A SIMILAR APPROACH TO CHARACTERISE
SOVIET COUNTER-RETALIATION AGAINST FURTHER EXPULSIONS FROM LONDON.
WE CANNOT ASSUME THAT THE RUSSIANS WOULD NECESSARILY RESPECT THE
DISTINCTION WHICH YOU PROPOSE TO MAKE (YOUR TUR PARA 2) BETWEEN
DIPLOMATIC AND NON-DIPLOMATIC STAFF. WHAT THE RUSSIANS WILL BE
CONCERNED WITH IS FUNCTION RATHER THAN RANK, IN ORDER TO DISABLE
THE FUNCTIONING OF THIS EMBASSY AS COMPREHENSIVELY AS POSSIBLE.
I AGREE THAT WE FOR OUR PART SHOULD AVOID EXPELLING FURTHER
SOVIET DIPLOMATS FROM LONDON: BUT WE SHOULD ALSO AVOID, IF AT ALL
POSSIBLE, EXPELLING THE SOVIET FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENTS OF THOSE
STAFF HERE WHOM WE CAN LEAST AFFORD TO LOSE.

5. MY MAIN CONCERNS ARE FIRSTLY OUR PHYSICAL SECURITY,
SECONDLY OUR ABILITY TO MAINTAIN COMMUNICATIONS AND THIRDLY OUR
RETENTION OF AT LEAST MINIMAL CAPACITIES IN REGISTRY AND
SECRETARIAL STAFF.

6. THE EXPULSIONS OF ALL OUR TECHNICAL STAFF, APART FROM STIVEN
WHO IS ABOUT TO RETURN FROM LEAVE, HAS LEFT US HIGHLY VULNERABLE
TO TECHNICAL ATTACK. WE SHOULD THEREFORE BE CONCERNED TO
AVOID TEMPTING THE RUSSIANS TO EXPEL STIVEN (NOTWITHSTANDING
HIS DIPLOMATIC STATUS) OR TO DENY VISAS TO REPLACEMENT TECHNICAL
STAFF. EQUALLY, ANY FURTHER REDUCTION IN OUR COMPLEMENT OF
SECURITY OFFICERS WOULD LEAVE US HIGHLY VULNERABLE TO PHYSICAL
AS WELL AS AS TECHNICAL ATTACK: IT FOLLOWS THAT, IF POSSIBLE,
WE SHOULD NOT EXPEL FROM THE SOVIET EMBASSY THOSE WITH
EQUIVALENT DUTIES. THE SAME GOES FOR OUR SURVIVING
COMMUNICATORS: WE NEED TO KEEP THEM. SO FAR AS SECRETARIAL
STAFF ARE CONCERNED, WE HAVE FIVE LEFT. IT COULD BE ARGUED
THAT WITH FEWER OFFICERS HERE TO ENGAGE IN POLITICAL REPORTING
THE DEMANDS ON OUR SECRETARIAL SERVICES WILL DECREASE. THIS IS
TRUE BUT WE ARE ALREADY PRETTY WELL DOWN TO THE BONE.

7. TO SUM UP, LEAVING ASIDE (AS YOU PROPOSE TO DO) SERVICE ATTACHES AND SERVICE SUPPORT STAFF, WE HAVE HERE, AFTER DEDUCTING THOSE ALREADY EXPELLED, FOURTEEN NON-DIPLOMATIC STAFF. IF WE WERE TO LOSE SIX OF THESE AS A RESULT OF SOVIET COUNTER-EXPULSIONS OUR INFRA-STRUCTURE WOULD BE DAMAGED TO THE POINT AT WHICH THIS EMBASSY COULD BARELY OPERATE. THIS WOULD EQUALLY BE THE CASE IF THE RUSSIANS IGNORE THE DIPLOMATIC/NON-DIPLOMATIC DISTINCTION AND RETALIATE AGAINST NON-DIPLOMATIC EXPELLEES FROM LONDON BY EXPELLING E.G. STIVEN, PINBOROUGH/WALL

6. IT FOLLOWS THAT IF THERE HAVE TO BE SIX FURTHER EXPELLEES FROM LONDON, AND IN CONSEQUENCE SIX FURTHER EXPELLEES FROM MOSCOW, THE MORE THESE CAN BE CONCENTRATED ON AREAS OTHER THAN THOSE IDENTIFIED IN PARA 5 ABOVE, THE BETTER. I MUST, I AM AFRAID, DECLINE TO MAKE YOUR TASK EASIER BY OFFERING UP HOSTAGES: I AM SURE THAT YOU WOULD NOT EXPECT ME TO DO SO AND THAT YOU CAN DRAW THE APPROPRIATE CONCLUSIONS FROM WHAT I HAVE SAID ABOVE.

9. FINALLY, I AM SURE THAT MINISTERS WILL HAVE BORNE IN MIND THE FACT THAT SOVIET GOVERNMENT MACHINERY, WITH ITS INFINITELY SUPERIOR RESOURCES OF MANPOWER AND MONEY, WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE GOOD ITS LOSSES IN LONDON VERY MUCH MORE QUICKLY AND EASILY THAN WE WITH OUR WELL-KNOWN CONSTRAINTS WILL BE ABLE TO DO HERE. DESPITE THIS, I HOPE VERY MUCH, AND STRONGLY RECOMMEND, THAT THE ONE IMPLIED ITEM OF GOOD NEWS IN YTUR, NAMELY THAT THERE HAS NOT AS YET BEEN AN APPARENT DISPOSITION TO WITHDRAW OR MODIFY OUR REVISED PROPOSALS ON CEILINGS WILL SURVIVE THIS FURTHER SPASM INTACT, DESPITE THE INEVITABLE SOVIET COUNTER-RETALIATION.

CARTLEDGE

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