

GRS 235

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TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 599 OF 4 JULY 1980

INFO PRIORITY BONN

INFO ROUTINE UKDEL NATO

INFO SAVING WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW

BONN TELNO 530: CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S VISIT TO MOSCOW

1. I AM PUZZLED BY THE REFERENCE IN PARAGRAPH 3 OF BONN TUR TO THE FRENCH NEUTRON BOMB IN THE CONTEXT OF SCHMIDT'S STATEMENT TO THE BUNDESTAG ABOUT THE "DECISION" ANNOUNCED IN PRESIDENT GISCARD'S PRESS CONFERENCE ON 26 JUNE. IN FACT, THE ONLY DECISION ANNOUNCED THEN WAS TO DEVELOP A MOBILE STRATEGIC LAUNCHER, WHICH WOULD ULTIMATELY REPLACE THE FIXED MISSILES ON THE PLATEAU D'ALBION AND WHICH WOULD OF COURSE HAVE A CAPACITY TO ATTACK TARGETS IN THE SOVIET UNION SIMILAR TO THE LRTNF STRIKE CAPACITY WHICH NATO AGREED TO CREATE IN ITS DECISION OF 12 DECEMBER. THIS HAS NOTHING IN COMMON WITH FRENCH PLANS FOR A NEUTRON BOMB, ON WHICH THE FRENCH HAVE TAKEN NO DECISION. PRESIDENT GISCARD SPOKE OF A CONTINUATION OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEUTRON BOMB WITH A VIEW TO DECIDING IN 1982/83 WHETHER TO UNDERTAKE PRODUCTION.

2. IT IS ODD THAT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT SHOULD HAVE GIVEN PRESIDENT GISCARD A SPECIAL ACCOLADE BY SINGLING OUT FRANCE IN THIS WAY. I NOTED THAT HE SINGLED FRANCE OUT SOMEWHAT SIMILARLY IN THE PASSAGE ON AFGHANISTAN IN HIS SPEECH IN MOSCOW (FIRST SENTENCE OF THE SECOND PARAGRAPH OF THE EXTRACT IN MOSCOW TELNO 448). IT IS NORMAL FOR THE FRG AND FRANCE TO GIVE EACH OTHER MUTUAL PRAISE AND SUPPORT WHEN DETENTE IS AT ISSUE, BUT IT SEEMS ECCENTRIC TO PICK FRANCE OUT FOR PRIVILEGED MENTION WHEN COLLECTIVE DEFENCE AND RESISTENCE TO THE SOVIET UNION ARE THE ISSUES.

FCO PLEASE PASS TO SAVING ADDRESSEES

HIBBERT

[REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

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