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OF 301715Z SEPTEMBER 88

AND TO DESKBY 301745Z MODUK

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, PARIS, UKDEL NATO, CICC(G)

MODUK FOR PS/SOFS AND SEC(NATO/UK)(P) *Council.*

UK-FRG DEFENCE RELATIONS

SUMMARY

1. DEFENCE MINISTER SCHOLZ MAY PROPOSE TO MR YOUNGER ON 4 OCTOBER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BRITISH-GERMAN DEFENCE COMMISSION. IF HE DOES, I RECOMMEND THAT MR YOUNGER SHOULD AGREE. IDEAS FOR COMPOSITION AND ROLE OF NEW COMMISSION. *Why?*

DETAIL.

2. WE HAVE FAXED TO MOD TEXT OF POINTS SUGGESTED BY FMOD FOR SCHOLZ'S PRESS STATEMENT AFTER HIS MEETING WITH MR YOUNGER ON 4 OCTOBER. THIS INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE:-

'IN ORDER TO COOPERATE EVEN MORE CLOSELY AND MORE EFFECTIVELY IN THIS FIELD, THE TWO MINISTERS HAVE AGREED TO SET UP A GERMAN-BRITISH COMMISSION AND TO ASSUME INTENSIVE TALKS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THIS COMMISSION IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY FIELDS OF JOINT ACTION, PARTICULARLY IN QUESTIONS OF TRAINING AND OPERATIVE COLLABORATION.'

3. SEPARATELY, RICHARD OWEN OF THE TIMES HAS BEEN TOLD TODAY BY SCHOLZ'S PRESS OFFICER, OFF THE RECORD, THAT SCHOLZ WOULD PROPOSE SUCH A COMMISSION. (THE TIMES ON 1 OCT IS LIKELY TO REFER TO THE POSSIBILITY).

4. FMOD HAVE TOLD ME THAT SCHOLZ HAS NOT FINALLY DECIDED WHETHER TO PROPOSE THE COMMISSION. HE HAS BEEN BRIEFED TO SUGGEST THAT IT SHOULD HAVE THREE SINGLE SERVICE SUB-GROUPS, WHICH WOULD CONSIDER FURTHER COOPERATION IN THEIR OWN FIELDS: AND THAT THE COMMISSION SHOULD CONSIDER MEANS OF DEVELOPING THE BILATERAL DEFENCE RELATIONSHIP AND PUBLICISING ITS IMPORTANCE. SCHOLZ'S BRIEFING APPARENTLY MAKES NO SUGGESTION AS TO THE LEVEL OF THE COMMISSION.

5. THIS PROPOSAL WOULD IN LARGE PART BE A RESPONSE TO OUR CASE, MADE

FOR MANY MONTHS NOW TO THE GERMANS, FOR RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BRITISH/GERMAN DEFENCE RELATIONS. I RECOMMEND THAT WE SHOULD ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL IF SCHOLZ MAKES IT.

6. SINCE GERMAN VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF A COMMISSION ARE GENERAL AND ON ITS COMPOSITION ARE APPARENTLY UNFORMED, WE HAVE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE OUR OWN SUGGESTIONS. JUDGING FROM WHAT FMOD HAVE TOLD ME, THEY INTEND THE COMMISSION TO BE CONCERNED WITH RELATIONS BETWEEN DEFENCE MINISTRIES. THAT WOULD IMPLY THAT IT WOULD NOT COVER ARMS CONTROL OR GENERAL POLITICO MILITARY MATTERS. AS SEEN FROM HERE THAT SEEMS ACCEPTABLE: WE HAVE A GOOD SYSTEM OF CONTACTS BETWEEN FOREIGN AND DEFENCE MINISTRIES IN THE POLITICO MILITARY FIELD.

7. A NEW COMMISSION COULD ACT AS AN UMBRELLA FOR OUR EXISTING DEFENCE AND SINGLE SERVICE STAFF TALKS, WHICH COVER CONCEPTS, POLICY, OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND PERSONNEL. IN THOSE FIELDS, AS IN OTHERS, THE PARTICULAR REMIT TO LOOK FOR FURTHER FIELDS OF COOPERATION WOULD BE ADDED TO THE EXISTING RANGE OF DISCUSSIONS. THE COMMISSION WOULD ALSO PROVIDE A FORUM FOR MORE FOCUSSED DISCUSSION OF IDEAS PUT FORWARD BY BOTH SIDES FOR GIVING HIGHER PROFILE TO THE BILATERAL DEFENCE RELATIONSHIP, EG PARALLEL MINISTERIAL ACTIONS, JOINT VISITS, SEMINARS AND JOINT TRAINING.

8. I ALSO SUGGEST THAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER TWO POSSIBLE ROLES FOR A COMMISSION THAT HAVE NOT BEEN MENTIONED BY FMOD. ONE WOULD BE THAT THE COMMISSION SHOULD ACT AS CONTINUING CONSULTATIVE FORUM ON ANY DEFENCE MATTERS THAT MAY ARISE. THAT COULD HAVE BEEN USEFUL IN RECENT WEEKS, WHEN THE GERMANS HAVE BEEN UNCOMMUNICATIVE ABOUT THEIR VIEWS ON AIR DISPLAYS AND LOW-FLYING. THE OTHER ADDITIONAL FIELD WOULD BE EQUIPMENT COLLABORATION. IN THIS FIELD, THERE ARE MULTILATERAL STRUCTURES: BUT THE ANGLO-GERMAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IN DEFENCE EQUIPMENT COLLABORATION IS IMPORTANT, AND A CONTINUING LINK BETWEEN THOSE CONCERNED IN THE TWO DEFENCE MINISTRIES WOULD I THINK BE USEFUL. SUCH A LINK COULD ALSO BE USEFUL WHEN WE HAVE PROBLEMS WITH THE GERMANS ABOUT EXPORTS OF JOINTLY PRODUCED EQUIPMENT. WE COULD HAVE MADE USE OF IT IN OUR ARGUMENTS WITH THE GERMANS ABOUT CREDIT FOR TORNADO SALES TO JORDAN.

9. IF A NEW COMMISSION IS TO ATTRACT PUBLIC INTEREST AND BE EFFECTIVE IN IMPROVING THE PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF ANGLO-GERMAN DEFENCE RELATIONS, IT WILL BE DESIRABLE FOR IT TO BE LED AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL. IF THE DEFENCE SECRETARY DID NOT WISH TO BE COMMITTED TO CHAIRING EVERY MEETING, THE RUBRIC MIGHT BE THAT PLENARY MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION WOULD BE CHAIRED AT MINISTERIAL

LEVEL SO THAT, FOR INSTANCE, THE MINISTER FOR THE ARMED FORCES AND STATE SECRETARY WUERZBACH COULD SOMETIMES CHAIR MEETINGS. MEETINGS AT AN OFFICIAL LEVEL COULD BE REGARDED AS SUB-GROUPS OF THE COMMISSION.

We have no need to do so.
And
10 SOME COMMENTATORS MIGHT ACCUSE US OF MERELY COPYING THE FRANCO-GERMAN DEFENCE COUNCIL. BUT THAT COUNCIL WILL CONSIST OF THE FRENCH PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER, CHANCELLOR KOHL AND THEIR FOREIGN AND DEFENCE MINISTERS. IT WILL HAVE A SECRETARIAT IN PARIS, AND WILL COVER SECURITY POLICY AS WELL AS DEFENCE QUESTIONS. A BRITISH-GERMAN COMMISSION OF THE TYPE SUGGESTED ABOVE WOULD BE NARROWER IN SCOPE AND LESS EXALTED IN LEVEL. SUCH A BODY, IF IT DID PRACTICAL AND EFFECTIVE WORK, WOULD BE MORE IN KEEPING WITH THE BUSINESS-LIKE CHARACTER OF THE UK-FRG DEFENCE RELATIONSHIP WHILE ALSO HELPING TO RAISE THE PROFILE. IT WOULD OF COURSE BOLSTER OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE ALLIANCE AND WOULD IN NO SENSE BE A BILATERAL SUB-STRUCTURE LIABLE TO UNDERMINE NATO.

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