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TELEGRAM NUMBER 2183 OF 18 JULY

INFO PRIORITY BONN, PARIS, ROME, UKDEL NATO, UKDIS GENEVA, MODUK  
INFO SAVING UKMIS NEW YORK

CONSULTATIONS WITH THE AMERICANS ON SPACE

1. WESTON, ACCOMPANIED BY ADMIRAL OSWALD, LED A SMALL FCO/MOD TEAM AT THE CONSULTATIONS ON SPACE AND THE STRATEGIC DEFENCE INITIATIVE (SDI) WHICH THE AMERICANS HAD ORGANISED HERE FOR CLOSE ALLIES ON 17/18 JULY (FULL REPORT BY BAG). THE FRENCH, GERMANS AND ITALIANS WERE LED RESPECTIVELY BY RENOARD, RUTH AND DANОВI, ALSO WITH MINISTRY OF DEFENCE SUPPORT. IN ADDITION TO PLENARY SESSIONS AT THE PENTAGON AND STATE DEPARTMENT (AT EACH OF WHICH THE US SIDE HAD FULL INTER-AGENCY REPRESENTATION), HEADS OF DELEGATION HAD SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH IKLE (UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLICY, DOD) AND ARMACOST (UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, STATE). WESTON ALSO HAD BILATERALS WITH BURT AND (ACCOMPANIED BY OSWALD) WITH PERLE, COVERING BOTH ASATS AND SDI. THE FRENCH, WITH THEIR MORE FORMED POSITION ON SPACE ARMS CONTROL, HAD HELD A SET PIECE BILATERAL WITH THE AMERICANS FOR HALF A DAY BEFORE THE LARGER MEETING STARTED.

2. THESE TWO DAYS MARKED AN IMPORTANT ADVANCE ON AMERICAN PREPAREDNESS TO ENTER INTO A PROCESS OF INTENSIFIED POLITICAL CONSULTATION WITH KEY ALLIES ON MILITARY SPACE MATTERS. THEY APPEAR INCREASINGLY TO REALISE THE NEED TO CARRY WIDER ALLIANCE SUPPORT FOR UNITED STATES POLICY AS IT EVOLVES AND TO GRAPPLE MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH SOME OF THE PROBLEMS THAT THE DEBATE, PARTICULARLY ON SDI, IS STARTING TO EXPOSE BOTH IN THE UNITED STATES AND IN EUROPE. THEY MAY ALSO BE BEGINNING TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE EMPHASIS ON THE RELEVANCE OF THE SDI TO THE DEFENCE OF THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE (NOT JUST THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES) CARRIES THE COROLLARY THAT THE CONCERNS OF, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR, EUROPE NEED TO BE TAKEN FULLY INTO ACCOUNT EVEN THOUGH THE SDI IS STILL AT AN EARLY PHASE OF RESEARCH AND FEASIBILITY STUDY. ALL THIS IS VERY WELCOME.

3. THE UK TEAM SOUGHT IN DISCUSSION TO STRIKE A NOTE OF CONSTRUCTIVE ENQUIRY, STRESSING THE CLOSE INTEREST OF SENIOR MINISTERS IN BOTH ASAT AND SDI, AND ALSO THE FACT THAT WE CERTAINLY DO NOT PRESUME TO KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS ON THESE COMPLEX ISSUES AND THEREFORE DO NOT APPROACH MATTERS WITH FIXED IDEAS. WESTON TOOK THE LINE THAT EVEN WITH SDI IN ITS EARLY STAGES POLICY IMPLICATIONS WERE BEGINNING TO PRESENT THEMSELVES IN THE SHORT TERM BOTH FOR INTER-ALLIANCE AFFAIRS AND FOR EAST/WEST RELATIONS. THE KEY AREAS INCLUDED THE COUPLING/DECOUPLING IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPE: THE IMPACT

ON NATO STRATEGY OF FLEXIBILITY RESPONSE AND ON EAST/WEST STABILITY:  
THE DEFENCE RESOURCES PROBLEM: AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR ARMS  
CONTROL. TO BEGIN TO ADDRESS SUCH ISSUES EVEN NOW WOULD BE A VALUABLE  
EXERCISE IN MAINTAINING ALLIANCE SOLIDARITY AND IN SEEKING TO  
CONVINCE CRITICS THAT SDI WAS NOT MERELY A TECHNICAL DIVERSION FROM  
AN ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL PROBLEM. THIS LINE WAS ALSO REFLECTED BY  
OTHER ALLIES WHO APPROACHED THE DISCUSSIONS IN A SIMILAR OPEN-MINDED  
AND DELIBERATELY NON-ANTAGONISTIC STYLE WHILE NOT HIDING THEIR  
CONCERNS.

4. THE AMERICANS DID NOT ADD SIGNIFICANTLY TO OUR FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE  
ABOUT THE SDI OR ASAT. WHAT DID EMERGE WAS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY  
THEMSELVES HAVE NO SETTLED VIEW OR ANSWERS ON MANY OF THE QUESTIONS  
RAISED AND THAT THIS UNCERTAINTY IS NOT SIMPLY A FUNCTION OF THE  
FACT THAT THE SDI TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY STUDIES ARE SEVERAL YEARS  
FROM COMPLETION. THERE CLEARLY IS SCEPTICISM AMONG SOME SENIOR  
US OFFICIALS AS TO WHETHER A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC DEFENCE  
SYSTEM WILL EVER BE DEPLOYED, IF ONLY FOR RESOURCE REASONS. EQUALLY  
THERE IS A FEELING THAT THERE MAY BE VALUABLE SPIN-OFF FROM THE  
RESEARCH ALONG THE WAY AND THAT THE SCALE AND EFFORT GOING INTO THE  
PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE OF STRATEGIC DEFENCE HAS AT THE VERY  
LEAST MADE A STRONG IMPRESSION ON THE RUSSIANS, WHICH MAY BE NO BAD  
THING IN THE WIDER NEGOTIATING CONTEXT.

5. ON ASATS STRONG INTER-AGENCY DIFFERENCES PERSIST ABOUT HOW FAR  
THE VIENNA TALKS WILL REQUIRE THE ADMINISTRATION TO HAVE A  
SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATING POSITION AND WHAT IT SHOULD BE. THESE  
RANGE FROM THE CIVILIAN SIDE OF THE PENTAGON WHO SEE LITTLE NEED  
FOR ANY: THROUGH ACDA, WHO WANT A LARGELY COSMETIC POSITION: WHILE  
OTHERS INCLUDING IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT APPEAR  
TO FAVOUR ONE LOW LEVEL ASAT SYSTEM ON EACH SIDE, WITH A BAN ON THE  
TESTING AND DEPLOYMENT OF HIGH LEVEL ASATS, . THE POSITION OF THE  
JOINT CHIEFS IS OPAQUE, BUT THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE OF DOUBTS IN  
USAF AND NAVY CIRCLES ABOUT THE US F15 LOW LEVEL ASAT PROGRAMME,  
WHICH COULD LEAD THEM TO FAVOUR A MORATORIUM ON ALL FURTHER ASAT  
TESTING. THE SENIOR INTER-AGENCY GROUP WILL MEET TO LAY OUT ALL THE  
OPTIONS AT THE END OF THIS WEEK. THE PRESIDENT IS EXPECTED TO CHAIR  
THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL IN AUGUST TO DECIDE BETWEEN THEM.  
AS FOR THE PROJECTED US/SOVIET VIENNA TALKS ON 18 SEPTEMBER, THE  
AMERICANS JUDGE THAT THERE ARE BETTER THAN EVEN CHANCES OF RESOLVING  
THE AGENDA PROBLEM SO THAT BOTH SIDES TURN UP ON THE DAY. BUT IN  
ADDITION TO BEING READY TO DISCUSS NEGOTIATING APPROACHES ON ASATS  
AND THE LONGER TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE SDI, THEY WILL CERTAINLY  
WISH TO RAISE THE RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS ON OFFENSIVE NUCLEAR  
FORCES, BECAUSE OF THE CLOSE CONNECTION BETWEEN THIS AND THE  
STRATEGIC DEFENSE ISSUE. THE AMERICANS ARE NOT CANVASSING SPECIFIC  
PRESCRIPTIONS FROM THEIR ALLIES AT THIS STAGE AS TO THEIR ASAT  
NEGOTIATING HAND, ALTHOUGH THEY REALISE THAT SOME ALLIES WILL HAVE

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THEIR OWN VIEWS. THEY HAVE NOTED YOUR MESSAGE TO SHULTZ WITH ITS EMPHASIS ON THE NEED TO TRY TO ENCOURAGE THE RUSSIANS TO ENAGAGE SERIOUSLY ON SPACE AT VIENNA. THEY HAVE ALSO NOTED THE PRIME MINISTER'S GUILD HALL SPEECH WITH ITS EMPHASIS ON THE CHALLENGE OF ARMS CONTROL IN OUTER SPACE AND THE NEED FOR NEGOTIATIONS AND MUTUAL RESTRAINT.

6. IT SEEMS TO BE ACCEPTED THAT THE PROCESS BEGUN HERE OF CONSULTATIONS WITH KEY ALLIES ON SPACE SHOULD CONTINUE AT APPROPRIATE INTERVALS, PROVIDING IT IS NOT OVER-FORMALISED. THE AMERICANS WILL NOW TRY TO PREPARE SOME FURTHER WRITTEN MATERIAL FOR CIRCULATION THROUGH THE DIPLOMATIC CHANNEL AND AS A WAY OF ORGANISING AND FOCUSING FUTURE DISCUSSION. THERE IS ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALLIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS PROCESS IF THEY WISH. THE INTENTION IS TO CONTINUE WITH THE PRESENT RESTRICTED GROUP OF KEY ALLIES, AT LEAST SO LONG AS ITS RELATIVE CONFIDENTIALITY MAKES THIS POSSIBLE. CONSULTATIONS IN THE WIDER NATO FORUM WILL IN ANY EVENT REMAIN NECESSARY AND THE AMERICANS ARE LIKELY TO ORGANISE A DISCUSSION IN THE FIRST HALF OF SEPTEMBER, WITH THE AIM OF ENSURING THAT THEY GO TO VIENNA WITH THE REQUIRED SUPPORT OF NATO AS A WHOLE. NONE OF THIS OF COURSE PRECLUDES THE FULLEST POSSIBLE USE OF OUR BILATERAL CHANNELS FOR CONSULTATION WITH THE AMERICANS ON MILITARY SPACE ISSUES, WHETHER THROUGH OUR REGULAR POLITICO-MILITARY TALKS OR ON SOME TAILOR-MADE OCCASION. WE NEED NOT IN MY VIEW BE AFRAID OF COMING TO OUR OWN CONCLUSIONS ABOUT ASATS AND SDI ON THE BASIS OF OUR OWN HOMEWORK, AND PUTTING THESE TO THE AMERICANS FOR DISCUSSION. PROVIDED WE CONTINUE TO DO THIS IN THE RIGHT SPIRIT THEY ARE LIKELY TO WELCOME AND VALUE IT AS A WAY OF TESTING THEIR THINKING AGAINST A RESPONSIBLE SECOND OPINION. EXPERIENCE OVER RECENT YEARS, ON BOTH INF AND THE MONTEBELLO DECISION TO REDUCE NATO SHORT RANGE NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN EUROPE, SHOWS HOW INFLUENTIAL A TIMELY WORD FROM US CAN BE.

U. PLEASE INCLUDE CARTLEDGE (CABINET OFFICE) AMONG ADVANCE COPY RECIPIENTS OF THIS TELEGRAM.

8. SEE MIFT.

WRIGHT

Reference : Law Tech  
Dec 79

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