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US/SOVIET ARMS CONTROL TALKS

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FM WASHINGTON
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 2933
OF 192335Z NOVEMBER 86
INFO IMMEDIATE UKDEL NATO, MODUK
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MODUK SIC A2A

MY TELNO 2933: ARMS CONTROL: US POST-CAMP DAVID SPEECHES
SUMMARY

1. THE PRESIDENT REAFFIRMS THE ARMS CONTROL PRIORITIES AS AGREED AT CAMP DAVID AND ADDS A REFERENCE TO THE CONVENTIONAL IMBALANCE.
DETAIL
2. LATE ON 18 NOVEMBER THE PRESIDENT SPOKE AT A DINNER GIVEN IN WASHINGTON BY THE ETHICS AND PUBLIC POLICY CENTER, A RIGHT WING THINK TANK. THE OVERALL THEME OF THE SPEECH (AN IN-HOUSE WHITE HOUSE/NSC CONSTRUCT) WAS THE SUCCESSFUL REASSERTION, AFTER THE CARTER PERIOD, OF US SELF-CONFIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF WESTERN VALUES: PARA 1 OF MIFT GIVES THE FLAVOUR. BUT THE SPEECH ALSO INCLUDED A SHORT PASSAGE ON ARMS CONTROL, WHICH IS SET OUT IN FULL AT PARA 2 OF MIFT.
3. IN THIS LATTER PASSAGE THE PRESIDENT, THOUGH RESTATING THE FACT THAT ALL THE US REYKJAVIK PROPOSALS ARE STILL ON THE TABLE, CONFIRMS THAT THE US PRIORITIES FOR EAST/WEST NEGOTIATIONS NOW ARE THOSE DISCUSSED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AT CAMP DAVID ON 15 NOVEMBER. MOREOVER HE ADDS TO THE THREE THEN AGREED (PARA 1(B) OF OUR TELNO 2904) THE NEED TO ADDRESS CONVENTIONAL FORCE IMBALANCES.
4. MOST OF THE US PRESS CONCENTRATES ON THE SPEECH'S MAIN THEME, SOME CONTRASTING IT WITH THE CURRENT CRISIS ON POLICY ON IRAN (WHICH WAS NOT MENTIONED). BUT THE WASHINGTON POST, IN A FRONT PAGE REPORT HEADED QUOTE REAGAN BACKS OFF MISSILE PROPOSAL UNQUOTE ARGUES THAT THE OMISSION FROM THE PRIORITIES LISTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE BALLISTIC MISSILES QUOTES MARKS AN APPARENT VICTORY FOR ALLIED LEADERS, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE JCS, WHO HAD VOICED STRONG OPPOSITION UNQUOTE. THE WASHINGTON POST SUGGESTS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER AT CAMP DAVID DEMANDED THAT THE US PUBLICLY DROP THE IDEA OF ELIMINATING BALLISTIC MISSILES,

POST SUGGESTS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER AT CAMP DAVID DENIED THAT THE US PUBLICLY DROP THE IDEA OF ELIMINATING BALLISTIC MISSILES, AND REGARDS LAST NIGHT'S SPEECH AS PROOF THAT HE DID INDEED AGREE TO DO SO

5. THE US PRESS ALSO CARRIES REPORTS FROM LONDON OF SATISFACTION AT THE CAMP DAVID OUTCOME, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO ARMS CONTROL PRIORITIES. OFFICIALS IN LONDON ARE QUOTED (IN THE WASHINGTON POST) AS MAINTAINING THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD QUOTE EFFECTIVELY SEPARATED THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROFESSED LONG TERM GOAL OF ELIMINATING STRATEGIC BALLISTIC MISSILES FROM A MORE REALISTIC SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF ALL ALLIANCE PARTNERS UNQUOTE.

COMMENT

6. THE WORDING OF THE PRESIDENT'S REFERENCE TO THE CAMP DAVID TALKS AND AGREEMENT CLEARLY IS VERY SATISFACTORY, AS IS THE ADDITIONAL REFERENCE TO THE CONVENTIONAL BALANCE. BUT WE WOULD DO WELL, IN DISCUSSION WITH US PRESS CORRESPONDENTS, NOT TO PLAY UP THE CAMP DAVID ACHIEVEMENTS TOO MUCH. WHILE SHULTZ'S 17 NOVEMBER SPEECH IS NOW OVERTAKEN BY THE PRESIDENT'S, THE RISK REMAINS THAT HE OR OTHERS WILL FEEL OBLIGED TO REAFFIRM THAT THE FULL 10-YEAR PROGRAMME PROPOSAL IS TO BE ACTIVELY PRESSED. AND THE RISK MAY GROW IF UK SATISFACTION AT ITS BEING PUT ON THE BACK BURNER - AS A RESULT OF CAMP DAVID - IS TOO FREQUENTLY REPORTED IN THE US PRESS.

7. PLEASE ADVANCE TO POWELL (NO10), PAKENHAM AND MEYER (FCO) AND LEDLIE (CPR/MOD) AND GRIFFITHS (DACU/MOD).

8. SEE MIFT.

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