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TELNO 435

OF 291442Z APRIL 87

PERSONAL FOR MR DEREK THOMAS.

CHIRAC'S MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, 26 APRIL.

1. BUJON GAVE ME THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT (ASKING THAT HIS CONFIDENCE BE RESPECTED) OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S DISCUSSIONS WITH CHIRAC ON 26 APRIL.

2. HE SAID THAT THE TONE AND ATMOSPHERE OF THE MEETING HAD BEEN EXCELLENT. 90 PER CENT OF THE TIME HAD BEEN SPENT ON EAST-WEST RELATIONS. OF THIS THEY HAD DEVOTED HALF AN HOUR TO THE SUBJECT OF WEU. BUJON THOUGHT THAT CHIRAC HAD MANAGED TO CONVINCED THE PRIME MINISTER THAT IT WAS OUTDATED TO CONCEIVE OF THE WEU (AS PERHAPS IN THE JOBERT ERA) AS AN ANTI-NATO ORGANISATION. FOR CHIRAC WHAT COUNTED WAS TO MAKE OF IT AN EFFECTIVE PLATFORM FOR EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION ON DEFENCE ISSUES. HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO EXPLAIN THAT A CHARTER WHICH RECALLED THE MAJOR PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING WESTERN SECURITY, IN PARTICULAR NUCLEAR DETERRENCE AND THE NEED FOR THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF US NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN EUROPE, COULD ONLY DO GOOD. IT WAS THE FRENCH IMPRESSION THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S THINKING HAD EVOLVED ON THIS IN RESPONSE TO CHIRAC'S PRESENTATION AND THAT OUR INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LUXEMBOURG WEU MEETING HAD REFLECTED THIS, FOR WHICH THEY WERE GRATEFUL.

3. ON THE LRINF/SRINF QUESTION, BUJON SAID THERE HAD BEEN TOTAL AGREEMENT WITH BOTH ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS. MRS THATCHER HAD BEEN CAREFUL TO SAY THAT THE BRITISH CABINET HAD NOT ADOPTED A POSITION, BUT BOTH SHE AND CHIRAC HAD AGREED THAT THEY DID NOT LIKE THE IDEA

BUT BOTH SHE AND CHIRAC HAD AGREED THAT THEY DID NOT LIKE THE IDEA OF THE SECOND ZERO OPTION ON SRINF, AND PREFERRED THE THIRD OF THE ALTERNATIVES PRESENTED BY SHULTZ TO THE NAC, NAMELY A CENTLING ON SYSTEMS BETWEEN 500 AND 1000 KILOMETRES AT LOWER LEVELS. IN THIS THE RETENTION OF THE GERMAN PERSHING IBS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF MODERNIZING THEM INTO PERSHING IBS WAS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT. IF HOWEVER THIS POSITION PROVED IMPRACTICABLE BECAUSE THE GERMANS COULD NOT BE BROUGHT TO ACCEPT IT, CHIRAC AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAD AGREED THAT THE FALL-BACK POSITION WAS TO DRAW A CLEAR LINE AT SYSTEMS OF 500 KILOMETRES AND NOT TO ALLOW NEGOTIATIONS TO BE PURSUED BENEATH THIS LINE.

4. CHIRAC HAD BEEN EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN THE VERY FULL ANALYSIS AND IMPRESSIONS THE PRIME MINISTER HAD GIVEN OF HER VISIT TO MOSCOW, AND STRUCK BY THE UNIFORM AND CONSISTENT PORTRAIT WHICH EMERGED OF GORBACHEV, WHEN THESE IMPRESSIONS WERE TAKEN TOGETHER WITH WHAT REAGAN HAD TOLD CHIRAC OF HIS IMPRESSIONS FROM REYKJAVIK.

5. BUJON SAID THERE HAD ALSO BEEN MUCH TALK OF THE ANGLO-FRENCH DEFENCE RELATIONSHIP INCLUDING NUCLEAR. HE IMPLIED THAT MRS THATCHER HAD SAID SHE WOULD PREFER TO AWAIT A REPORT FROM MR YOUNGER BEFORE COMMITTING HERSELF ON THE QUESTION OF ASMP BUT THAT HER GENERAL ATTITUDE HAD BEEN ONE OF OPEN-MINDEDNESS TO NEW IDEAS AND TO INCREASED BILATERAL COOPERATION.

6. BUJON SAID THE COMMUNITY ISSUES HAD BEEN MORE DIFFICULT, PARTICULARLY AGRICULTURAL PRICES AND THE PROPOSED TAX ON OILS AND FATS. HERE CHIRAC HAD FORMED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE UK WISHED AT ALL COSTS TO AVOID A QUARREL WITH THE AMERICANS. BUT SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE, AND NO-ONE HAD YET SUGGESTED A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE PROPOSED TAX.

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