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TO PRIORITY FCO  
TELNO 286  
OF 151640Z JULY 88  
INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, PARIS, BONNN, MODUK

WASHINGTON TELNO 1726: VISIT OF MARSHAL AKHROMEYEV TO THE US/  
ALLIED MILITARY CONTACTS WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

SUMMARY

1. LENGTHY BUT DEFENSIVE US DEBRIEF ON AKHTROMEYEV'S VISIT. SOME FLAK FROM ALLIES ON LACK OF CONSULTATION ON US RESUMPTION OF MILITARY CONTACTS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. AGREEMENT ON NEED TO CONSULT CLOSELY ON FUTURE ALLIANCE MILITARY TO MILITARY CONTACTS.

DETAIL

2. OPENING DISCUSSION, THE SECRETARY GENERAL SAID THAT AKHROMEYEV'S VISIT WAS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND AFTER THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN. BUT IT WOULD NO DOUBT BE FOLLOWED BY SIMILAR VISITS INVOLVING OTHER ALLIES. THE US/SOVIET EXCHANGE PROGRAMME AGREED DURING AKHROMEYEV'S VISIT SEEMED RATHER AMBITIOUS, AT LEAST COMPARED WITH THE TOTAL ABSENCE OF CONTACT UNTIL VERY RECENTLY. WOERNER SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT THIS WAS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT, BUT HE SAW GREAT MERIT IN TRYING TO CO-ORDINATE THE ALLIED APPROACH. IT WAS PROBABLY TOO AMBITIOUS TO AIM AT A UNIFIED ALLIED POLICY, BUT THE ALLIES SHOULD TRY TO AVOID GOING OFF IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS AND ENSURE AS AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM THAT THEY KEEP EACH OTHER WELL INFORMED.

3. INTRODUCING HIS BRIEFING, KEEL (US) SAID THAT ADMIRAL CROWE HAD INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO COME HIMSELF TO BRIEF THE NAC BUT THAT THIS HAD NOT BEEN POSSIBLE UNTIL NEXT WEEK: IT HAD BEEN THOUGHT BEST NOT TO DELAY THE BRIEFING. THE CROWE/AKHROMEYEV EXCHANGE, SAID KEEL, HAD BEEN THE SECOND OF THREE FORMAL MEETINGS OF TOP RANK US/SOVIET MILITARY OFFICIALS: THE FIRST HAD BEEN THE CARLUCCI/YAZOV MEETING IN BERNE (OUR TELNO 131) AND THE THIRD WOULD BE THE FORTHCOMING CARLUCCI/YAZOV MEETING IN MOSCOW IN AUGUST.

4. KEEL WENT OVER THE MAIN POINTS OF THE ITINERARY OF AKHROMEYEV'S 5 - 11 JULY VISIT. THIS HAD INCLUDED SESSIONS WITH THE JOINT

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CHIEFS OF STAFF, WITH CARLUCCI, VISITS TO UNITS OF ALL THE US ARMED FORCES (INCLUDING A STATIC DISPLAY OF THE BI BOMBER) AND A CALL ON THE PRESIDENT. THERE HAD ALSO BEEN A JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE. US AIMS IN INVITING AKHROMEYEV HAD BEEN TO EXPOSE HIM TO THE US ARMED SERVICES, (THERE WAS SAID KEEL 'NO BETTER DETERRENT'): TO GET HIM ACQUAINTED WITH THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF THE UNITED STATES: AND TO HELP HIM UNDERSTAND THE BASIC OPENNESS AND DIVERSITY OF WESTERN DEMOCRACIES. IT HAD BEEN A HISTORIC EXCHANGE: THE FIRST FORMAL VISIT OF A SOVIET CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF SINCE WORLD WAR II. THE US HAD HAD NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF CHANGING SOVIET BEHAVIOUR, BUT WAS CONVINCED THAT IT SHOULD PURSUE ALL AVENUES TO REDUCE TENSION. AKHROMEYEV HAD RECEIVED A COMPLETELY UNCLASSIFIED BRIEFING ON SELECTED PORTIONS OF THE US MILITARY. HE WOULD TAKE BACK AN IMPRESSION OF A CAPABLE MILITARY FORCE MANNED BY FIRST-RATE PEOPLE.

5. KEEL STRESSED THAT NEITHER AKHROMEYEV NOR CROWE WERE UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO NEGOTIATE ANYTHING AND HAD NOT DONE SO. BUT THERE HAD BEEN FREE AND FRANK DISCUSSIONS COVERING THE HISTORIES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES, THEIR DIFFERENT POLITICAL CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS, AND MILITARY ISSUES. AS ANTICIPATED THESE HAD SHOWN UP PROFOUND DIFFERENCES OF VIEW, WHICH WOULD TAKE DECADES TO UNRAVEL, IF EVER. BOTH SIDES HAD APPROACHED THE TALKS WITH PRUDENCE AND CAUTION. BUT IN THE US VIEW THE EXERCISE HAD BEEN USEFUL IN PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIFFERENCES AND MINIMISING THE POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT.

6. AKHROMEYEV HAD APPEARED PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE LEVEL OF TRAINING OF US ENLISTED PERSONNEL. HE WAS MOST IMPRESSED BY US OPENNESS AND DESCRIBED WHAT HE SAW AS 'DEMOCRACY IN ACTION'. THROUGHOUT HIS TRIP, AKHROMEYEV HAD BEEN AT PAINS TO STRESS THAT HIS VISIT WAS PART OF THE CONTINUING PROCESS OF IMPROVING RELATIONS. HE ARGUED THAT THE TWO ARMED FORCES SHOULD BUILD ON THIS OPENING, FOR EXAMPLE BY SETTING UP COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS.

7. THE EXCHANGES WITH THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF HAD BEEN THE MOST VIGOROUS OF THE VISIT, AND CENTRED ON MILITARY/MILITARY CONTACTS, AVOIDANCE OF DANGEROUS MILITARY ACTIVITIES, AND ARMS CONTROL. ON MILITARY/MILITARY CONTACTS THERE HAD BEEN AGREEMENT (WASHINGTON TELNO 1727) ON A CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR THE NEXT TWO AND A HALF YEARS. THE SCHEDULE WAS OF A GENERAL NATURE AND MIGHT BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. MILITARY ATTACHES ON BOTH SIDES HAD BEEN TASKED TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS.

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8. ON AVOIDANCE OF DANGEROUS MILITARY ACTIVITIES WHEN FORCES OF THE TWO SIDES WERE OPERATING CLOSE TO EACH OTHER, TALKS HAD CONCENTRATED ON TWO ISSUES: AIR INCIDENTS AND THE FEBRUARY 1988 BLACK SEA BUMPING SPISODE. BOTH HAD BEEN THE SUBJECT OF 'CANDID EXCHANGES'. ON THE LATTER, THE RUSSIANS HAD CONTENDED THAT THE RIGHT OF INNOCENT PASSAGE WAS CONTRARY TO SOVIET DOMESTIC LAW WHICH GRANTED FREE SEA PASSAGE ONLY WHEN NECESSARY. US SHIPS IN THE AREA HAD BEEN IN VIOLATION OF SOVIET LAWS WHICH SHOULD TAKE PRECEDENCE. IN REPLY, THE US HAD SAID THAT THE RIGHT OF INNOCENT PASSAGE WAS GUARANTEED BY CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL LAW: IN ANY CASE BUMPING A US VESSEL WAS NOT THE WAY TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM. THE TWO SIDES AGREED TO SET UP A WORKING GROUP TO EXAMINE THESE TWO AREAS AND OTHER POSSIBLE CAUSES OF DANGEROUS INCIDENTS.

9. ON ARMS CONTROL THERE HAD BEEN NO NEW POSITIONS OR AGREEMENTS, BUT THE EXCHANGES HAD PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP GREATER UNDERSTANDING. AKHROMEYEV HAD INDICATED THAT THE RUSSIANS MIGHT SHORTLY PROVIDE IN GENEVA ALCM CAPACITIES OF BEAR H AND BLACKJACK, WHICH THEY HAD SO FAR NOT DONE. AKHROMEYEV SEEMED CONCERNED AT THE CAPABILITIES OF THE US NAVY: HE WAS LIKELY, SAID KEEL TO CONTINUE TO ARGUE FOR THE USSR TO PRESS FOR NAVAL REDUCTIONS IN THE FORTHCOMING CST NEGOTIATIONS.

10. THERE HAD ALSO BEEN DISCUSSION OF SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE DURING THE COURSE OF THE VISIT. AKHROMEYEV HAD FOCUSED ON THE 'MILITARY-TECHNICAL' ASPECTS, WHICH HE DEFINED AS COMPRISING: THE NATURE OF THE THREAT: THE KIND OF AGGRESSION FORCES WOULD BE REQUIRED TO REPULSE: THE KIND OF ARMED FORCE NECESSARY FOR THIS: AND TRAINING METHODS. AKHROMEYEV CLAIMED THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE SURROUNDED BY US MILITARY BASES AND HAD BEEN FOR 40 YEARS. THEY WERE OBLIGED BY UNITED STATES RETENTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO TRAIN FOR NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL WAR. THE NEED NOW WAS TO ELIMINATE ASYMMETRIES, REDUCE MILITARY GROUPINGS AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF OFFENSIVE ACTION AND DEVELOP ZONES OF REDUCED MILITARY CONCENTRATIONS. AKHROMEYEV ALSO URGED ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF LARGE SCALE FLIGHTS OF STRATEGIC OR TACTICAL AIRCRAFT.

11. AKHROMEYEV HAD CLAIMED THAT SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE WAS NOW BASED ON 'DEFENSIVE SUFFICIENCY'. THIS MEANT MAINTENANCE OF A WAR-FIGHTING CAPACITY TO GUARENTEE STRATEGIC STABILITY AND SURE DEFENCE, BUT WITHOUT ANY OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY. IF ATTACKED, THE SOVIET UNION WOULD FIGHT DEFENSIVELY AT FIRST TO ALLOW TIME FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION. AKHROMEYEV SAID THAT WITHIN TWO TO THREE YEARS THE SOVIET UNION PLANNED TO ALTER THE POSTURE OF ITS FORCES

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IN EUROPE TO MAKE THEM OF LESS CONCERN TO THE WEST. BUT SOME WESTERN FORCES ALSO WORRIED THE RUSSIANS, IN PARTICULAR THE FACT THAT THE WEST HAD 1500 MORE STRIKE AIRCRAFT THAT THE WARSAW PACT WHICH COULD CONDUCT SURPRISE ATTACKS 1000 KMS INSIDE SOVIET TERRITORY. AKHROMEYEV HAD MAINTAINED THAT UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS WERE THEREFORE UNREALISTIC: WHAT WAS REQUIRED WERE BILATERAL CUTS.

12. IN RESPONSE CROWE WENT OVER ALLIANCE STRATEGY AND PHILOSOPHY. HE ALSO STRESSED THE US VIEW THAT THE DEFENCE OF NATO, KOREA AND JAPAN WAS ALSO THE DEFENCE OF THE UNITED STATES. CROWE RAISED US CONCERNS AT THE SIZE OF THE SOVIET SUBMARINE FORCE AND STRESSED THAT WESTERN NAVIES WERE THERE TO PROTECT NATO STRATEGIC LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS: GIVING UP THIS CAPABILITY WOULD BE LIKE ASKING THE RUSSIANS TO DESTROY ALL THE ROADS FROM THE USSR TO THE GDR. CROWE WAS AT PAINS TO MAKE CLEAR THAT HE WOULD NOT AND COULD NOT SPEAK FOR THE ALLIANCE ON SUCH THINGS AS DATA EXCHANGE.

13. SUMMING UP, KEEL SAID THAT THE FUTURE PROGRAMME MIGHT BE AMBITIOUS, BUT THAT IT HAD BEEN BUILT STEP BY STEP IN CONSULTATION WITH ALLIES. STEADY IMPLEMENTATION OF PRESIDENT REAGAN'S FOUR PART AGENDA HAD ENABLED SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN EAST/WEST RELATIONS. THE US HAD LONG HELD THAT INCREASED CONTACT WITH THE SOVIET MILITARY WOULD OFFER IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITIES. THE SOVIET DEFENCE ESTABLISHMENT PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN DECISION-MAKING IN THE SOVIET UNION AND IT WAS WORTH GETTING GREATER INSIGHT INTO ITS THINKING. THE US APPROACHED FUTURE MILITARY/MILITARY CONTACTS WITH SOBER BUT SUBSTANTIVE GOALS: GREATER ACCESS TO THE SOVIET DEFENCE ESTABLISHMENT ON THE BASIS OF RECIPROCITY, AS A CHANNEL TO PUT US AND WESTERN CONCERNS ABOUT SOVIET DEFENCE POLICIES DIRECTLY TO SENIOR OFFICERS, TO ENHANCE US AND ALLIED SECURITY IN PART BY DEMONSTRATING WESTERN MILITARY CAPABILITY, TO FOSTER GREATER SOVIET OPENNESS ABOUT MILITARY POLICY, TO BUILD CONFIDENCE AND REDUCE CONFRONTATION, AND TO FURTHER ADVANCE ALLIANCE POSITIONS AND OBJECTIVES. AT THE SAME TIME THE US WAS ALERT TO THE DANGER OF MISREPRESENTATION AND MANIPULATION. THE US AUTHORITIES WERE AWARE OF THE EFFECT THAT SUCH VISITS COULD HAVE ON PUBLIC OPINION, IN PARTICULAR IN REDUCING THREAT PERCEPTIONS.

14. IN CONCLUSION, KEEL SAID THAT THE US WISHED TO STRESS THAT THIS DIALOGUE WOULD NOT SERVE AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR EXISTING OR PLANNED NEGOTIATIONS. HE WOULD SEEK TO GIVE ALLIES AS MUCH FURTHER DETAILS AS POSSIBLE IN WRITING. THE US WOULD CONTINUE TO CONSULT AND CO-ORDINATE ON THE APPROACH TO MILITARY/ MILITARY CONTACTS.

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IN PARTICULAR, THE US WOULD OFFER THE USUAL BRIEFINGS BEFORE AND AFTER THE EVENT ON THE FORTHCOMING YAZOV/CARLUCCI MEETING.

15. FOR DISCUSSION SEE MIFT.

ALEXANDER

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