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SECRETARY OF STATE'S VISIT TO ATHENS: WEU

SUMMARY

1. GREECE OFFERS NEW ALTERNATIVE TEXTS FOR POLITICAL DECLARATION ON ARTICLE 5.

DETAIL

2. WEU WAS BRIEFLY DISCUSSED AT THIS MORNING'S PLENARY SESSION WITH MITSOTAKIS (MY TELNO 174).

3. IN A SEPARATE EARLIER DISCUSSION BETWEEN OFFICIALS (PLUS TZOUNIS) THE GREEK SIDE ARGUED THAT THE UNDERSTANDING AT MAASTRICHT HAD BEEN THAT FULL GREEK MEMBERSHIP OF WEU SHOULD BE UNCONDITIONAL. IF THE ARTICLE 5 GUARANTEE WAS NOW EMASCULATED, IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR MITSOTAKIS TO COMMEND WEU ACCESSION TO THE GREEK PARLIAMENT, WHICH HE PLANNED TO DO IN PARALLEL WITH RATIFICATION OF MAASTRICHT. THE PRESENT DRAFT TEXT OF THE POLITICAL DECLARATION WAS TOO OBVIOUSLY AIMED AT GREECE AND WOULD BE SEVERELY CRITICISED BY THE OPPOSITION AND BY PUBLIC OPINION. PARTNERS NEED NOT FEAR THAT GREECE WOULD EVER ACTUALLY INVOKE ARTICLE 5 AGAINST A NATO ALLY: ITS VALUE WAS POLITICAL RATHER THAN PRACTICAL.

4. THE GREEK SIDE THEN PRODUCED TWO ALTERNATIVE TEXTS FOR THE POLITICAL DECLARATION (SEE MIFT). THESE SO FAR HAD BEEN GIVEN ONLY TO THE GERMANS. GREECE HOPED FOR UK SUPPORT.

5. WE DEPLOYED STANDARD ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE FUTURE ROLE OF WEU AND THE IMPACT ON TURKISH THINKING IF EVEN A MODIFIED ARTICLE 5 GUARANTEE REMAINED IN FORCE FOR POSSIBLE USE AGAINST NATO ALLIES. WE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT BEHIND THE POINTS OF DRAFTING LAY A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE OF VIEW BETWEEN GREECE AND THE PRESENT WEU MEMBERS ABOUT WHETHER GREECE NEEDED OR SHOULD BE GIVEN A SECURITY GUARANTEE AGAINST TURKEY, EVEN FOR USE ONLY IN EXTREMIS. THE GREEK

SIDE ACCEPTED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE IN THE INTEREST OF GREECE OR THE WEST IF TURKEY WALKED AWAY FROM WHAT WEU NOW OFFERED, AND THAT THEIR TEXTS WOULD BE HARDER FOR ANKARA TO SWALLOW. BUT MITSOTAKIS ALSO HAD REAL DIFFICULTIES OF DOMESTIC PRESENTATION, AND HIS EUROPEAN PARTNERS SHOULD HELP HIM. WE AGREED ONLY THAT THE GREEK TEXTS WOULD BE STUDIED IN LONDON, WITHOUT HOLDING OUT ANY HOPE OF THEM PROVING ACCEPTABLE TO US OR TO OTHER PARTNERS.

COMMENT

6. THE LINKAGE BETWEEN SATISFACTION OVER ARTICLE 5 AND GREEK RATIFICATION OF MAASTRICHT WAS MORE EXPLICIT TODAY THAN IN MITSOTAKIS'S LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER (MY TELNO 155). THE GREEK SIDE MAY BE OVERSTATING THE PARLIAMENTARY DIFFICULTIES, AND MITSOTAKIS MUST KNOW THAT TO WITHHOLD MAASTRICHT RATIFICATION (WITH ALL ITS BENEFITS FOR GREECE) WOULD BE VERY RISKY. IT MAY BE SIGNIFICANT THAT MITSOTAKIS DID NOT HIMSELF PRESS YOU HARD ON THE POINTS WHICH HIS OFFICIALS HAD RAISED SEPARATELY. BUT HE HAS THOUGHT IT WORTH MAKING AT LEAST ONE MORE EFFORT TO SECURE POLITICAL DECLARATION LANGUAGE WHICH WILL LET HIM ARGUE HERE THAT GREECE HAS GAINED AN ARTICLE 5 GUARANTEE (ALBEIT WITH QUALIFICATIONS) AGAINST TURKEY. IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE SECOND GREEK ALTERNATIVE IS THE ONE WHICH THEIR HOPES ARE REALLY PINNED.

7. IF THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY TO MITSOTAKIS'S LETTER OF 31 MARCH ABOUT WEU HAS NOT YET BEEN SIGNED, AS DISCUSSED WITH YOU I HOPE IT CAN BE AMENDED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF TODAY'S DISCUSSION AND OF YOUR REACTION TO THIS NEW GREEK INITIATIVE. WE SHOULD IN ANY CASE AIM TO GIVE AT LEAST A PRELIMINARY RESPONSE TO LYBEROPOULOS (WHO SEEMS TO BE LEADING FOR THE MFA ON THIS) BEFORE HE NEXT HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS WEU COLLECTIVELY WITH POLITICAL DIRECTORS. IT IS ALSO HIGHLY DESIRABLE TO GET THE GERMANS ON OUR SIDE BEFORE THEY REPLY TO THE GREEKS.

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ADDITIONAL

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