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FM PARIS 101731Z JAN 80

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 50 OF 10 JANUARY 1980

INFO PRIORITY UKDEL NATO BONN UKREP BRUSSELS UKMIS NEW YORK
AND WASHINGTONINFO ROUTINE BRUSSELS COPENHAGEN DUBLIN LUXEMBOURG ROME
THE HAGUE AND MOSCOW

MIPT: BRITAIN, THE COMMUNITY AND THE AFGHANISTAN CRISIS

1. THE SCHMIDT/GISCARD MEETING, THE SITUATION IN NATO DESCRIBED IN SIR CLIVE ROSE'S TELNO 20 AND THE IMMINENCE OF THE LORD PRIVY SEAL'S VISITS TO COMMUNITY CAPITALS DESERVE PERHAPS FROM THE PARIS VIEW POINT TO BE BROUGHT TOGETHER IN A SINGLE TELEGRAM.

2. THE SCHMIDT/GISCARD ATTITUDE HAS BECOME PUBLIC SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH A FIRING UP OF THE US ATTITUDE (PRESIDENT CARTER'S DECISION TO HOLD UP INDUSTRIAL/TECHNOLOGICAL EXPORTS TO THE SOVIET UNION). THE IMPRESSION HERE IN PARIS IS THAT A DIVERGENCE FROM THE UNITED STATES IS BEING CULTIVATED, THAT FRANCE IS WORKING TOWARDS A EUROPEAN POSITION ON AFGHANISTAN DIFFERENT IN VARIOUS RESPECTS FROM THAT

PEAN POSITION ON AFGHANISTAN DIFFERENT IN VARIOUS RESPECTS FROM THAT OF THE US (SOLIDARITY WITH THE US BUT NO ALIGNMENT), AND THAT THE PROCESS OF EUROPEANISING THE SCHMIDT/GISCARD ATTITUDE IS GOING TO BE PURSUED AT THE MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF THE NINE IN POLITICAL COOPERATION NEXT TUESDAY, 15 JANUARY.

3. A GAP IS GROWING BETWEEN BRITAIN ON THE ONE HAND AND FRANCE AND GERMANY ON THE OTHER IN BOTH SUBSTANCE AND FORM, IN SUBSTANCE BECAUSE BRITAIN IS SEEN TO BE SEEKING ALIGNMENT AS WELL AS SOLIDARITY, AND IN FORM BECAUSE THE UK EFFORT HAS BEEN CONCENTRATED IN NATO AND NOT IN POLITICAL COOPERATION OF THE NINE (NOR IN THE UNMENTIONABLE BUT NEVERTHELESS INDESPENSIBLE TRIPARTITE COOPERATION WHICH NEEDS TO UNDERLINE POLITICAL COOPERATION OF THE NINE).

4. I ARGUED IN THE AUTUMN OF LAST YEAR THAT ONE IMPORTANT WAY IN WHICH BRITAIN COULD INCREASE ITS VALUE TO FRANCE AND GERMANY WAS BY COMING CLOSER TO THEM IN EAST/WEST RELATIONS AND THAT THIS PRESUPPOSED A BRITISH CONCEPT OF DETENTE WHICH, WHILE NOT IDENTICAL WITH FRANCE'S AND GERMANY'S, WOULD AT LEAST, BY EXISTING, MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO SEEK COMMON GROUND WITH THEM.

5. THE DIVERGENCE CAUSED BY THE AFGHANISTAN CRISIS MAKES IT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO PURSUE THIS LINE, AND I NOTE FROM FCO DESPATCH TO MOSCOW OF 7 DECEMBER FOLLOWING THE EASTERN EUROPEAN HEADS OF MISSIONS MEETING THAT THE FCO NO LONGER HAS A CONCEPT OF DETENTE BUT ONLY A CONCEPT OF PRAGMATIC DEALINGS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. I SUGGEST NEVERTHELESS THAT CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO TRYING TO FIND A WAY OF CLOSING THE DIVERGENCE IF, AS I ASSUME, THE LORD PRIVY SEAL'S TASK ENJOYS A VERY HIGH PRIORITY IN BRITISH POLICY AT THE PRESENT TIME. IT WOULD MUCH FACILITATE PRESIDENT GISCARD'S INTEREST IN KEEPING BRITAIN ISOLATED IN THE COMMUNITY IF THERE WERE TO BE A FRANCO/GERMAN LINE-UP ON AFGHANISTAN FROM WHICH BRITAIN WAS CLEARLY EXCLUDED. HE WILL ALSO BE WATCHING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO ARGUE THAT BRITAIN IS INHERENTLY UN-EUROPEAN AND ALWAYS LINES UP FIRST WITH THE USA.

6. I VENTURE TO SUGGEST THAT, AS REGARDS FORM, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF A BRITISH EFFORT TO RALLY PARTNERS ON THE AFGHANISTAN QUESTION WERE TO BE PURSUED MORE IN POLITICAL COOPERATION OF THE NINE THAN IN NATO AND IF AN EFFORT COULD BE MADE TO PRECONCERT A POINT OF VIEW WITH FRANCE, GERMANY AND PERHAPS ITALY. AS REGARDS SUBSTANCE, IT SEEMS VERY DESIRABLE TO TRY TO FIND A CONCEPTUAL BASIS FROM WHICH TO PULL FRANCE AND GERMANY BACK FROM AN ATTITUDE WHICH BEGINS TO VERGE ON APPEASEMENT. IF IT IS THOUGHT THAT THE WORD DETENTE IS TOO DANGEROUS TO USE BECAUSE OF ITS NON-TECHNICAL OVERTONES, I SUGGEST THAT THE SORT OF CONCEPT ON WHICH A SATISFACTORY APPROACH COULD BE

... SUGGEST
THAT THE SORT OF CONCEPT ON WHICH A SATISFACTORY APPROACH COULD BE
BASED COULD BE DRAWN FOR EXAMPLE FROM PAGES 119, 120 AND 123 OF
HENRY KISSINGER'S WHITE HOUSE YEARS.

HIBBERT.

IMMEDIATE

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SENT AT 101849Z CDC