

February 17, 1986
**Washington, DC to Department of External Affairs
(Canada), 'Alliance Problems Over INF'**

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Summary:

In a flurry of cables from February 1986, Canadian assessments focused on a chronic issue within NATO: in consultation within the alliance. The Special Consultative Group was used as a forum to "air views of allies," hold briefings on the current state of negotiations, and to share a new negotiating position right before it was tabled. Canadian officials also warned of disagreement to come between the Europeans and the Americans over the "zero option," the longstanding proposal to reduce both US and Soviet INF to zero.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

ACC	461183
FILE	27-4-NATO-1-INF
	27-4-NATO-3-1-USA

**ACTION
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C O N F I D E N T I A L

FM WSHDC UNGR1422 17FEB86

TO EXTOTT/IDR

INFO BNATO CANMILREP NATO BRU MOSCO LDN PRMNY BONN ROME

VMEFR GENEV PARIS HAGUE OSLO COPEN ATHNS STKHM/SCDEL

PCOOTT/FOWLER/SANDI/IAC

TT NDEQOTT/ADM POL/DNACPOL/ CPP/DSTRATA/CIS/DGSPOL/ DE CAF

TT PILLAROTT DE OMP

DISTR IDD IFB MINA USS DMC UGB IDA RBR RCR RSR RBD RCD RSD

CPD IND INP URR IDAO IDAN RGX IDX IDRL IDRA IDAV RGBE

---ALLIANCE PROBLEMS OVER INF

SUMMARY:REPORTS FROM EUROPEAN POSTS, USS CONVERSATIONS HERE

AND NOW PRESS REPORTS TESTIFY TO VERY REAL POSSIBILITY OF

INTER-ALLIANCE PROBLEM OVER ZERO-OPTION FOR INF NEGS. USA

TENDENCY TO SEE THIS PROBLEM AS BEING RESULT OF EUROPEAN

INCONSISTENCY AND FECKLESSNESS COULD AUGMENT PROBLEMS.

REAL ISSUES ARE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC ACD NEGS, EMPHASIS ON

PR ELEMENTS OF PROPOSALS, AND NATURE OF ALLIANCE ACD CONSULTS

WHEN ZERO-OPTION WAS FIRST PROPOSED (CONSULTATION PROCESS

REMAINS VERY MUCH THE SAME TODAY).

2.REPORT:REPORTS ON NITZE NMTGS AND ANALYSES OF EUROPEAN

REACTIONS TO GORBACHEV 16JAN PROPOSAL AND LIKELY USA

RESPONSE INDICATE POTENTIAL PROBLEM FOR ALLIANCE AS

EUROPEANS, CONSCIOUS OF CONCERNS ABOUT DECOUPLING WHICH WERE

MAJOR PART OF INITIAL DECISION TO DEPLOY INF TO EXPRESS CAUTION

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ABOUT THE ZERO-OPTION. PRESS REPORTS NOW SURFACING
HERE AND USS CONVERSATIONS WITH WHITEHEAD AND ARMACOST (SEE
CURTEL UNGR-1419, 13 FEB) SHOW THAT USA IS TENDING TO SEE A
SHIFT OR EVEN A CONTRADICTION IN EUROPEAN POSITIONS. THEY
ARGUE THAT WHILE USA WAS HANGING TOUGH, EUROPEANS WERE
URGING FLEXIBILITY; NOW EUROPEANS ARE WARNING USA NOT/NOT TO
GIVE AWAY TOO MUCH. DANGER IS THAT ADMIN HARDLINERS WILL
MISINTERPRET THIS AS INDICATING THAT EUROPEANS ARE REALLY
NO/NO MORE KEEN ON ARMS CONTROL THAN USA AND THAT THEY
PRESSED USA IN PAST FOR THEIR OWN DOMESTIC REASONS BUT IN
HOPE THAT USA WOULD NOT/NOT RESPOND BY GOING TOO FAR.

3. REAL FAULT LIES IN PRACTICE OF CARRYING OUT ACD NEGS IN
PUBLIC. WHEN ZERO-OPTION WAS DEVELOPED IT WAS ESPOUSED INITIALLY
BY USA FOR ITS ATTRACTIVENESS IN PR TERMS—JUST AS LATER SDI
WAS JUSTIFIED AS MEANS OF ELIMINATING NUCLEAR WEAPONS. DECOUPLING
ISSUES WERE LEFT ASIDE. USA FELT THAT FOR WEST TO CLAIM IT
WAS SEEKING A WAY TO ELIMINATE INF WAS BEST MANNER TO EMBARRASS
SOVS AND ENSURE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR INF DEPLOYMENT. TACTIC WORKED
INITIALLY AND CONTINUED TO WORK FOR AS LONG AS IT REMAINED A
VALID ASSUMPTION THAT SOVS WOULD NEVER AGREE TO DISMANTLE ALL
THEIR SS20S IN EUROPE. FOR ALL WE KNOW ASSUMPTION MAY STILL
BE VALID AND GORBACHEVS OFFER MAY ALSO BE PR FLOY BUT TO
EXTENT IT IS SINCERE ALLIES WHO HAD DOUBTS ABOUT THE
ZERO-OPTION ARE NOW CAUGHT, AT LEAST, CONCEPTUALLY.

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4. EARLY ALLIED CONCERN ABOUT DECOUPLING AND THE ZERO-OPTION WAS OVER-COME BY COMBINATION OF TWO FACTORS. FIRST WAS THAT ALLIES THEMSELVES SAW ATTRACTION IN PR TERMS OF ZERO-OPTION. SECOND WAS NATURE OF QUOTE CONSULTATION UNQUOTE PROCESS. THROUGHOUT INF PROCESS, CONSULTATIONS PROCEDURE VERY CLOSELY APPROXIMATED CLASSIC QUOTE WE TOLD YOU AS SOON AS WE HAD DECIDED AND BEFORE WE TOLD THE SOVS UNQUOTE MODE. SCG WAS USED TO AIR VIEWS OF ALLIES, THEN TO BRIEF ON NEGS, AND FINALLY TO INFORM ON NEW POSITIONS JUST BEFORE THEY WERE DELIVERED TO SOVS, NEVER FOR REAL GIVE AND TAKE. PARALLEL TO THIS WAS INSTITUTION OF PRACTICE OF HAVING PRES WRITE TO HOGS CONVEYING NEW POSITIONS AND ASKING VIEWS, -USUALLY WITH VERY SHORT REACTION TIME, SOMETIMES AS SHORT AS 48 HRS. UNTIL USA POSITIONS WERE FINALIZED USA DID NOT/NOT SHARE ANY INSIGHTS INTO WHERE THEY WERE GOING-OFTEN BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT/NOT SURE THEMSELVES BUT ALSO BECAUSE THEY DID NOT/NOT WANT THE ALLIES PLAYING AN UNPREDICTABLE ROLE IN THEIR OWN OFTEN SENSITIVE INTERAGENCY NEGS. ALLIES HAD TO COMMENT IN SCG MTGS ON BASIS OF LEAKS IN PRESS OR ON WHAT THEIR WSHDC EMBS WERE ABLE TO FERRET OUT FROM OFFICIALS, PRESS OR OTHER EXPERTS. DEVICE OF PRESIDENTIAL LET SOMETIMES

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MADE REAL CONSULTATIONS IN SCG ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE OFFICIALS WERE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE BEFORE THEY COULD BE SURE WHAT THEIR OWN LEADERS WOULD SAY TO PRESIDENT AND LEADERS WERE OFTEN RELUCTANT TO RAISE OBJECTIONS BECAUSE TO DO SO WOULD HAVE MEANT DISAGREEING WITH THE PRES HIMSELF. IN THIS SITU DECOUPLING ISSUE WAS OVER-RIDDEN AND LOST. NOW AS IT IS BEING REVIVED IT APPEARS AS CONTRADICTION BY EUROPEANS OF PAST POSITIONS, AND AS POTENTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN USA AND EUROPE. 5. LESSON OF ZERO-ZERO ISSUE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IF PROBLEM DEVELOPS IT WILL BE SIGNIFICANT, AND BECAUSE CURRENT CONSULTATION PROCESS ON ACD ISSUES, OFTEN MORE A MATTER OF FORM THAN SUBSTANCE, IS INHERENTLY FLAWED.

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