

February 19, 1986
**Brussels-NATO (BNATO) 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: consultation within the alliance. As this dispatch from Brussels concluded, paraphrasing Winston Churchill, "NATO nuclear collective consultation is the worst form, except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

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**ACTION
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TO EXTOTT | IDR

INFO CANMILREP NATO WSHDC FRU MOSCO LDN PRMNY BONN ROME VMBFR GENEV

PARIS OSLO ATHENS SIKHM/SCDEL PCOTT/FOWLER/SANDI/IAC

TT NDEQOTT/ADMPOL/DNACPOL/PPP/DSIRATA/CIS/DGSPOL/ DE CAF

TT PILLAROTT DE OMP

BAG COPEN HAGUE DE PAR

DISTR IDD IFB MINA USS DMC UGE IDA RBR RCR RSR RBD RCD RSD CPD IND

INP URR IDAO IDAN RGX IDX IDRL IDRA IDAV RGEE

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---ALLIANCE PROBLEMS OVER INF

WE AGREE WITH WSHDC RETEL THAT ZERO-ZERO GLOBAL OPTION AS FIRST
ADVANCED BY NATO WAS CONCEIVED IN PR TERMS. THIS IS APPARENT
FROM REPORT BY SCG PREDECESSOR SPECIAL GROUP ON ARMS CONTROL
(PO/79/102) WHICH FORMED A BASIS FOR DEC 1979 DECISION ALONG
WITH ELG REPORT. SPECIAL GROUP STATED THAT QUOTE ANY ACHIEVABLE
ARMS CONTROL OUTCOME INVOLVING LRTNF WOULD NOT, IN THE
FIRST STEP, ELIMINATE ENTIRELY THE SOVIET LRTNF THREAT AND
WOULD NOT OBIVIATE THE NEED FOR SOME LRTNF MODERNIZATION TO MEET THE
ALLIANCES OWN SECURITY REQUIREMENTS UNQUOTE. AND FURTHER, QUOTE
ONE COULD POSTULATE AN ARMS CONTROL OUTCOME SO SUCCESSFUL THAT
THE SOVIET MODERN LONG RANGE THEATRE NUCLEAR THREAT WAS
ELIMINATED, THEREBY PERMITTING NATO TO CONSIDER SUSPENDING ITS
OWN LRTNF MODERNIZATION PLANS. AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, HOWEVER,
SUCH AN OUTCOME IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY, AND POSING IT AS A REALISTIC
POSSIBILITY COULD LEAD TO AN IMMEDIATE AND LASTING IMPASSE,
WHILE SOVIET DEPLOYMENTS GREW UNQUOTE.

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2. IN SHORT, FEW PEOPLE IMAGINED EITHER THAT USSR WOULD BUY ZERO-GLOBAL OPTION OR THAT IT WAS IN NATO'S INTEREST AT ANY RATE. REFERRING TO SPECIAL GROUP AGAIN QUOTE THE ALLIANCE SHOULD NO MORE PERMIT NEEDED DEPLOYMENTS TO BECOME HOSTAGE TO THE OUTCOME OF ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS THAT IT SHOULD ADOPT AN ARMS CONTROL POSTURE SOLELY TO CAMOUFLAGE NEW DEPLOYMENTS. ACCORDINGLY, THE ZERO-GLOBAL OPTION LOOKED LIKE A SAFE BET. IT WAS CALCULATED TO HAVE PUBLIC APPEAL TO SHOW NATO WAS PROCEEDING WITH LRINF MISSILE DEPLOYMENTS IN SORROW RATHER THAN ANGER AND THAT FOR ITS PART, WOULD MUCH PREFER TO SEE NO SYSTEMS OF THIS KIND ON EITHER SIDE.

3. ZERO-EUROPE OPTION IS OF COURSE SOMETHING ELSE ALTOGETHER - IT IS ZERO/ZERO-PLUS APPROACH. IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT ZERO-EUROPE APPROACH SHOULD CREATE MORE MISGIVINGS THAN ZERO-GLOBAL OPTION. IN ANY EVENT EUROPE FREE OF LRINF MISSILES WOULD STILL LEAVE NATO EXPOSED TO MASSIVE THREAT FROM SOVIET LRINF AIRCRAFT AND SHORTER RANGE MISSILE AND AIRCRAFT (SEE OUR REFTEL 6150). FLAWS IN ZERO-EUROPE APPROACH, NOTABLY RETENTION OF SS20 IN ASIA AND FREEZE ON UK/FRENCH MODERNIZATION, ARE SUFFICIENTLY OBVIOUS AND UNDERSTANDABLE THAT THOSE WHO DO NOT LIKE IT NEED WORRY THAT FLAWS IN ZERO-GLOBAL OPTION HAVE BEEN EXPOSED.

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4. EVENTS HERE OF LAST WEEK WITH NITZE MTG WITH NAC AND SCG MTG DID NOT IN FACT FOLLOW CLASSIC QUOTE WE TOLD YOU AS SOON AS WE HAD DECIDED AND BEFORE WE TOLD THE SOVIETS UNQUOTE CONSULTATIVE MODE SUGGESTED IN WSHDC REFTEL. IF NITZE AND SCG CHRMN HOLMES CAME SIMPLY TO INFORM ON NEW POSITION JUST BEFORE IT WAS DELIVERED TO USSR, IT DID NOT APPEAR THAT WAY NOR HAVE EVENTS SINCE THEN SUGGESTED IT. NITZE AND HOLMES SPOKE OF PRESIDENT REAGANS INCLINATIONS ON HOW BEST TO RESPOND TO GORBACHEVS NUCLEAR WEAPONS-FREE WORLD PROGRAM. IT WAS NOT ALL SMOOTH SAILING THOUGH- UK/FRANCE/NETH/BEL ALL EXPRESSED MISGIVINGS ABOUT ZERO-EUROPE APPROACH. WE UNDERSTAND FROM UK PERMREP THAT HIS GOVTS MISGIVINGS WERE MADE EVEN CLEARER WHEN NITZE PASSED THROUGH LDN. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND USA WAS TAKEN ABACK BY EXTENT OF JAPANESE UNHAPPINESS WITH ZERO-EUROPE APPROACH. WE SUSPECT USA MAY HAVE WISHED TO GET ITS RESPONSE TO GORBACHEVS PROPOSALS TABLED BEFORE NOW. LONGER RESPONSE IS DELAYED, THE LONGER THAT GORBACHEVS PROPOSAL HAS THE RUNNING. ALSO, AS ALLIED MISGIVINGS ABOUT REAGANS ZERO-EUROPE INCLINATIONS FILTER OUT USSR IS PROVIDED FURTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR MISCHIEF MAKING.

5. THE SCG, IS, IN PRINCIPLE, A HIGHLY IMPERFECT CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM. OFTEN IT APPEARS MORE TO BE A CASE OF ALLIANCE BEING SEEN TO CONSULT RATHER THAN MEANINGFULLY CONSULTING. THERE ARE FEW NATO CITIES WHOSE CHRMN GIVE PRESS CONFERENCES ROUTINELY FOLLOWING THEIR MTGS AS DOES THE SCG CHRMN, ALBEIT IN HIS OWN NAME.

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THERE IS NEVERTHELESS INTRINSIC VALUE IN THE ALLIANCE BEING SEEN TO CONSULT.

6. SCG HOWEVER, IN OUR VIEW COUNTS FOR MORE THAN THAT GRANTED INITIATIVES ARE NOT BORN WITHIN SCG; THEY ARE HOWEVER NURTURED THERE. NATOS MOVE FROM ZERO-GLOBAL APPROACH TO INTERIM INF PROPOSAL IS CASE IN POINT. IT WAS APPARENT AT TIME THAT MANY WANTED TO COME OFF ZERO-GLOBAL PROPOSAL AND SHOW SOME FLEXIBILITY. THIS DESIRE WAS REFLECTED IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY EUROPEAN LEADERS AND THERE WAS CERTAIN CONSTITUENCY FOR THIS VIEW IN WSHDC. BY SAME TOKEN, THERE IS WELL KNOWN WSHDC CONSTITUENCY WHICH FAVOURS PLAYING HARD BALL WITH USSR IN ARMS CONTROL. VOICES IN FAVOUR OF MORE FLEXIBLE APPROACH HEARD SEPARATELY, EITHER IN PUBLIC UTTERANCES OR BILATERAL CONTACTS, WERE ECHOED COLLECTIVELY IN SCG. COLLECTIVE REITERATION OF VIEWS ALLOWED NON-BASING COUNTRIES TO BE SEEN TO JOIN VOICES WITH BASING COUNTRIES IN FAVOUR OF INTERIM PROPOSAL. THIS IN TURN COULD ONLY STRENGTHEN HAND OF THAT WSHDC CONSTITUENCY WHICH WAS ARGUING IN INTER-AGENCY DISCUSSIONS FOR FLEXIBILITY. WE DOUBT THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN INTERIM PROPOSAL AS EARLY AS THERE WAS IF IT WERE NOT FOR ALLIED URGING; SCG PLAYED SOME PART IN THIS.

7. SIMILAR DYNAMIC WAS AT WORK IN SCG ENCOURAGEMENT OF USA COMING FORWARD WITH COUNTER-COUNTER PROPOSAL (CCP) LAST FALL. HERE AGAIN WE DO NOT SUGGEST THAT USA CAME UP WITH CCP ONLY BECAUSE EUROPEANS WANTED IT. WHAT IS CLEAR HOWEVER IS THAT HANDS OF THOSE

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IN WSHDC WHO FAVOURED SUCH APPROACH COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN STRENGTHENED BY WHAT WAS HEARD IN ERU BOTH AT SHULTZ MTG 15OCT AND SCG A WEEK LATER. TO THAT EXTENT USA TOOK COUNSEL OF ALLIES. FOR MORE GENERAL CONSIDERATION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF NATO CONSULTATION ON STRATEGIC/NUCLEAR ISSUES SEE OUR REFTEL 7038.

8. AT LEVEL OF MORE SPECIFIC ISSUES ALSO, SCG HAS BEEN USEFUL TO ALLIES IN IMPRESSING ON USA PARTICULAR SENSITIVITIES BY ENCOURAGING COLLECTIVE CONSIDERATION. NOTABLE EXAMPLES ARE FRG URGING, EARLIER ON, THAT USA ATTACH SPECIFIC NUMBERS TO INTERIM PROPOSAL, AND LONG-STANDING BELGIAN CONCERN ABOUT TREATMENT OF SRINF IN INF AGREEMENT. ONCE AGAIN WHEEL WAS NOT INVENTED IN SCG, BUT SPOKES WERE ADDED.

9. WHILE NATO CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON STRATEGIC/NUCLEAR AND ISSUES IS IMPERFECT, THERE IS SOME GIVE AND TAKE (PARTICULARLY ON INF) AND TO THIS EXTENT IT IS MEANINGFUL BEYOND PR VALUE. THERE IS OF COURSE TORTUOUS HISTORY TO NATO SEARCH FOR CLOSER ALLIED SHARING WITH USA ON NUCLEAR ISSUES (WELL DOCUMENTED IN PAUL BUTEUXS QUOTE THE POLITICS OF NUCLEAR CONSULTATION IN NATO 1965-1980 UNQUOTE). WE STRONGLY BELIEVE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS IN RECENT YEAR, LOOKED AT FROM HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, IS MUCH IMPROVED; EUROPEAN DIRECT STAKE IN INF AND IMPLICATIONS OF SDI FOR NATO STRATEGY, ARMS CONTROL AND EAST-WEST RELATIONS MORE GENERALLY ...6

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HAVE MUCH TO DO WITH THIS. VALUE OF NATO CONSULTATION
PROCESSES IS TO CONSIDERABLE EXTENT PROPORTIONATE TO USE
PARTICIPANTS MAKE OF THEM. OUR EXPERIENCE IS THAT THEY ARE
IMPORTANT AND USEFUL TO ALL, INCLUDING USA. TO PARAPHRASE
CHURCHILL, NATO NUCLEAR COLLECTIVE CONSULTATION IS THE
WORST FORM, EXCEPT ALL THESE OTHER FORMS THAT HAVE BEEN
TRIED FROM TIME TO TIME.

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