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TAGS: PARM, PREL, NATO, GE
SUBJECT: CODEL BYRD: MEETING WITH DEFENSE MINISTER;
PRESS CONFERENCE

REF: BONN 04808

1. (C) SUMMARY

IN HIS FEB. 9 MEETING WITH CODEL BYRD, DEFENSE MINISTER WOERNER DISCUSSED HIS VIEW ON ALLIANCE DEALINGS WITH THE SOVIETS AND ARMS CONTROL THEMES. HE DEFENDED THE WEST'S INSISTENCE THAT MOSCOW BE MORE FORTHCOMING IN CONVENTIONAL ARMS ISSUES IN EXCHANGE FOR INCREASED WESTERN COOPERATION. ON THE THORNY QUESTION OF MODERNIZATION, WOERNER SUPPORTED MONTEBELLO FOLLOW-UP, BUT ARGUED THAT THE TIMING ON SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION STEPS WAS NOT RIGHT. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT A MONTEBELLO DISCUSSION NOW WOULD FUEL A DOMESTIC DEBATE AND CREATE THE IMPRESSION THAT MODERNIZATION REPRESENTED A DEVELOPMENT FLOWING FROM THE INF TREATY. HE AGREED WITH SENATOR NUNN THAT CONVENTIONAL STABILITY TALKS (CST) SHOULD CONSTITUTE NATO'S NEXT ARMS CONTROL PRIORITY, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT EXPECT A CST MANDATE UNTIL LATE IN THE FALL OF THIS YEAR. HE PORTRAYED THE FRANCO-GERMAN BRIGADE AS A POSITIVE STEP IN PULLING FRANCE BACK INTO THE NATO FOLD. THE CODEL EARLIER GAVE A 30-MINUTE PRESS CONFERENCE, FIELDING QUESTIONS ON NUCLEAR MODERNIZATION AND INF TREATY RATIFICATION. EMBASSY OFFICER ACCOMPANIED CODEL. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) AFTER AN EXCHANGE OF COURTESIES, SENATOR BYRD BEGAN THE CONVERSATION BY UNDERSCORING THE U.S. SENATE'S SUPPORT FOR NATO COHESION. IT WAS THIS COLLECTIVE SPIRIT, HE SAID, WHICH BROUGHT THE SOVIETS BACK TO THE INF

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NEGOTIATING TABLE AND EVENTUALLY PRODUCED THE INF TREATY. THE ALLIANCE NEEDED TO COUNT ON THIS SAME SPIRIT IN APPROACHING THE DIFFICULT POST-INF DECISIONS ON WESTERN DEFENSE. THE SENATOR INVITED DEFENSE MINISTER WOERNER'S VIEWS OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEALING WITH IT.

DEALING WITH THE SOVIETS --
MAKE COOPERATION A TWO-WAY STREET

3. (C) WOERNER SECONDED SENATOR BYRD'S COMMENTS ON ALLIANCE SOLIDARITY, SAYING THAT AS NATO'S NEXT SECRETARY-GENERAL, HE WAS KEENLY AWARE OF THE ROLE THIS COHESION WOULD PLAY IN THE CHALLENGING TIMES AHEAD. AS DEFENSE MINISTER, HE COULD ALSO ADD THAT THE FATE OF A FREE GERMANY DEPENDED ON NATO SOLIDARITY.

4. (C) REGARDING SOVIET GENERAL SECRETARY GORBACHEV, WOERNER SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THE SOVIET LEADER WAS SEEKING TO REFORM A FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY-MAKING SYSTEM. HE HAD HIS OWN INTERESTS AND AGENDA, THEREFORE, IN PUSHING FOR THE REALIZATION OF COMMON SECURITY GOALS WITH THE WEST. IN DEALING WITH GORBACHEV, THE ALLIANCE NEEDED TO FIRMLY INSIST THAT COOPERATION BE A TWO-WAY STREET, RESISTING THE TEMPTATION TO MEET HIM MORE THAN HALF-WAY SIMPLY BECAUSE HE ENDORSED SOME OF THE WEST'S ARMS CONTROL OBJECTIVES. NATO HAD EVERY RIGHT TO DEMAND THAT THE SOVIETS DO MORE, SUCH AS IN THE AREA OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS, IN RETURN FOR GREATER WESTERN COOPERATION.

NUCLEAR MODERNIZATION

5. (C) RESPONDING TO SENATOR NUNN'S QUESTION ON THE NEED FOR MODERNIZATION IN THE POST-INF ENVIRONMENT, WOERNER SAID HIS POSITION WAS CLEAR. THE ALLIANCE HAD TAKEN THE MONTEBELLO DECISION AND NEEDED TO TAKE THE ACTIONS THAT FLOWED FROM IT. HE HAD SO REITERATED TO THE CHANCELLOR THE DAY BEFORE. MODERNIZATION OF NUCLEAR ARTILLERY, WEEDING OUT OLDER MUNITIONS, WAS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN UPGRADING BATTLEFIELD SYSTEMS.

6. (C) THE PROBLEM WAS ONE OF TIMING. THIS WAS NOT THE TIME FOR THE ALLIANCE TO DEFINE MONTEBELLO FOLLOW-UP
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STEPS. TO DO SO WOULD TRIGGER AN UNDESIRABLE DEBATE (IN THE FRG) AND CREATE THE IMPRESSION THAT MODERNIZATION OF SHORT-RANGE SYSTEMS IS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE INF TREATY. THERE WAS NO NEED PRESENTLY TO AGREE ON A LANCE FOLLOW-ON, A SYSTEM WHICH WOULD CONTINUE TO SERVE THE ALLIANCE UNTIL 1993. SENATOR NUNN VOICED AGREEMENT WITH WOERNER'S ASSESSMENT ON MODERNIZATION.

CONVENTIONAL STABILITY --
"THE NEXT ARMS CONTROL PRIORITY"

7. (C) THE DEFENSE MINISTER AGREED WITH SENATOR NUNN'S STATEMENT THAT CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL SHOULD CONSTITUTE NATO'S NEXT ARMS CONTROL OBJECTIVE, ADDING THAT THE PUBLIC'S ATTENTION HAD TO BE DIVERTED FROM DISCUSSIONS

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ON NUCLEAR ISSUES "IN A DELICATE WAY." NATO HAD TO STEP UP ITS PUBLIC DIPLOMACY EFFORTS HERE; OTHERWISE THE PUBLIC SPOTLIGHT WOULD REMAIN ON SHORT-RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES TALKS, WHERE A THIRD ZERO OPTION (WHICH HE STRONGLY OPPOSED) WAS A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY.

8. (C) WOERNER TOLD THE CODEL THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT TO SEE A MANDATE ON CONVENTIONAL STABILITY UNTIL THE SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER TIMEFRAME. HE EXPRESSED HIS VIEW THAT THE ALLIANCE SHOULD NEVERTHELESS ACCELERATE EFFORTS TO DEFINE AN OPENING NATO PROPOSAL, "THE SOONER THE BETTER." HE SAID THE U.S. AND THE FRG HELD SIMILAR VIEWS ON CONVENTIONAL CRITERIA, ESSENTIAL IN FASHIONING AN APPROACH WHICH WOULD HIT AT THE SOVIET OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY.

FRANCO-GERMAN BRIGADE

9. (C) WOERNER REPEATED FAMILIAR FRG VIEWS ON THE FRANCO-GERMAN BRIGADE. THE FRG CONSIDERED ITS CREATION A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, HE SAID, IN DRAWING FRANCE INTO A NATO STRATEGY OF FORWARD DEFENSE. THE FRG WOULD TAP UNITS DRAWN FROM ITS SOUTHERN TERRITORIAL COMMAND FOR THE BRIGADE, LEAVING ITS NATO FORCES UNTOUCHED. AS ENVISIONED, THE NATIONAL UNITS COMPRISING THE BRIGADE WOULD REPORT TO THEIR NATIONAL COMMAND IN PEACETIME. IN WARTIME, THEY WOULD REPORT UNDER ONE OF TWO SCENARIOS: TO THE GERMAN SOUTHERN TERRITORIAL COMMAND, IN THE REAR AREA; AND, TO THE FRENCH CORPS IN THE FORWARD AREA. UNDER BOTH SCENARIOS, THE BRIGADE WOULD OPERATE IN CLOSE COORDINATION WITH NATO.

PRESS CONFERENCE

10. (U) FOLLOWING THE MEETING WITH CHANCELLOR KOHL (REPORTED SEPT 1) AND BEFORE THE CALL OF WOERNER, THE CODEL GAVE A 30-MINUTE PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE FEDERAL PRESS CENTER. PRESENT WERE MEMBERS OF THE GERMAN AND THE U.S. PRINT MEDIA. A GERMAN TELEVISION CREW FILMED-TAPED PORTIONS FOR THE EVENING NEWS PROGRAM.

11. (U) IN AN OPENING STATEMENT, SENATOR BYRD EXPLAINED THAT THE FIVE U.S. SENATORS WERE VISITING FIVE EUROPEAN CAPITALS TO HEAR FIRST-HAND EUROPEAN LEADERS' REACTIONS TO THE INF TREATY, THINKING ON POST-INF, AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP. HAVING JUST VISITED WITH THE CHANCELLOR, SENATOR BYRD SAID, HE COULD ENTHUSIASTICALLY SAY THAT THE U.S.-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP IS UNSHAKABLE. AMERICANS AND GERMANS SHARED THE VIEW THAT NATO UNITY AND COHESION HAD BROUGHT US THE INF TREATY, WHICH "IS A GOOD TREATY." THE U.S. AND THE FRG ALSO BELIEVED THAT POST-INF STRATEGIES MUST RESULT FROM COLLECTIVE PLANNING BASED ON PERCEIVED MUTUAL SECURITY INTERESTS, NOT ON PERCEIVED GOODWILL OR INTENTIONS ON THE PART OF ADVERSARIES. WHILE WE SHOULD GO ON THE OFFENSIVE IN SEEKING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORLD PEACE, WE MUST BE EVER CAUTIOUS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY THE CASE WITH A START TREATY. THE SENATOR SAID THAT THE U.S. WOULD NEED TO PROCEED CAREFULLY AND PATIENTLY, REMEMBERING THAT ONLY A GOOD TREATY CAN SERVE THE INTERESTS OF ALL. THERE SHOULD BE NO TIMETABLE FOR A START TREATY; THE TIME FOR SUCH A TREATY IS WHEN "WE

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CAN GET THE RIGHT TREATY." (SENATOR WARNER SUPPORTED SENATOR BYRD'S COMMENTS ON START, SAYING HE AGREED THAT THE TIME FOR AN AGREEMENT IS WHEN THE U.S., IN CONSULTATIONS WITH ITS ALLIES, AGREE THAT THE RIGHT AGREEMENT IS AT HAND AND THAT IT SERVES THE SECURITY INTERESTS NOT ONLY OF THE U.S., BUT OF OUR ALLIES AS WELL.)

12. (U) MEDIA QUESTIONING LARGELY CENTERED ON THE ISSUE OF MODERNIZATION, WITH SENATOR NUNN RESPONDING ON BEHALF OF THE CODEL. FOR THE MOST PART. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION CITING GERMAN APPREHENSION ON MONTEBELLO FOLLOW-UP, NUNN STATED THAT, BASED ON DISCUSSIONS WITH FRG OFFICIALS, HE DID NOT SENSE THAT THERE WAS ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NATO ALLIES AND THE FRG REGARDING THE CONCEPT OF MONTEBELLO. THERE WAS THE FEELING WITHIN THE FRG GOVERNMENT, HE BELIEVED, THAT THE MONTEBELLO DECISION IN CONCEPT SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT, ALTHOUGH IT WAS EQUALLY TRUE THAT THE GERMANS WANTED TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE POST-INF ENVIRONMENT BEFORE DETERMINING SPECIFICALLY HOW THE ALLIANCE WOULD PROCEED. THE SENATOR EXPRESSED HIS VIEW THAT THE GERMAN POSITION WAS AN UNDERSTANDABLE ONE. ADDING THAT THE U.S. SHOULD CONSULT VERY CLOSELY WITH THE FRG AND OTHER NATO ALLIES IN DECIDING WHERE THE ALLIANCE WANTED TO GO ON MODERNIZATION. NUNN REMINDED THE MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE THAT THE 1983 MONTEBELLO DECISION AFFECTING NUCLEAR MODERNIZATION HAD BEEN TAKEN BEFORE INF AND THE WEAPONS SYSTEMS EARMARKED FOR MODERNIZATION WERE NOT INCLUDED IN THE INF TREATY. THE SENATOR VOICED HIS SUPPORT FOR MODERNIZATION AS CALLED FOR UNDER MONTEBELLO, SAYING THAT THE ALLIANCE SHOULD BE FLEXIBLE IN ITS APPROACH.

13. (U) CODEL WAS ASKED IF IT EXPECTED EARLY RATIFICATION OF THE INF TREATY. SENATOR BYRD PROVIDED A ONE-WORD RESPONSE: YES. SENATOR PELL ADDED THAT THE SENATE WAS PROCEEDING WITH ALL DISPATCH. IN ADDITION TO THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, THE TREATY WOULD BE SCRUTINIZED BY THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON ARMED SERVICES AND INTELLIGENCE. HE SAID HE EXPECTED TO GET THE TREATY TO THE SENATE FLOOR SOMETIME IN MARCH. SENATOR BOREN ADDED THAT THE SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE WAS PROCEEDING WITH ITS HEARINGS ON THE VERIFICATION PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY; THAT UP TO NOW, NO PROBLEMS HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED. HE PREDICTED A FAVORABLE REPORT BY HIS COMMITTEE.

14. (U) CODEL DID NOT HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THIS CABLE BEFORE DEPARTING BONN.
DOBBINS

END OF MESSAGE

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