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DOS Review Completed.

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DE WTE #0409 0420759  
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FM THE SITUATION ROOM//TOHAK 13//

TO GOMPERT FOR THE SECRETARY

T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY CONTAINS CODEWORD  
VIA BLACK PATCH WH5012R

TOHAK 13

FEBRUARY 11, 1975

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY  
FROM: THE SITUATION ROOM  
SUBJECT: INFORMATION ITEM

BELGIANS, DUTCH MOVING TOWARD CHOICE OF MIRAGE:

EMBASSY BRUSSELS LEARNED ON MONDAY THAT THE BELGIAN MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS HAVE PREPARED A JOINT PAPER FOR PRESENTATION TO THE PRIME MINISTER RECOMMENDING THAT BELGIUM PURCHASE THE FRENCH MIRAGE INSTEAD OF AN AMERICAN PLANE TO REPLACE ITS F-104 FIGHTERS, PRIMARILY ON POLITICAL GROUNDS. THE BELGIANS REPORTEDLY ARE TESTING THIS POSITION WITH THE DUTCH IN TALKS NOW UNDERWAY BETWEEN THE BELGIAN AND DUTCH MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE. IF THE DUTCH DO NOT REACT STRONGLY AGAINST THIS POSITION, THE EMBASSY SOURCE REPORTS THAT THE BELGIAN MINISTERS WILL INFORM PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS THAT THEY INTEND TO PRESENT IT AS THE BELGIAN POSITION AT THE FEBRUARY 17 MEETING OF THE DEFENSE MINISTERS OF THE FOUR NATION CONSORTIUM. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THIS REPORT IS PROBABLY ACCURATE. IF IT IS CONFIRMED BY BELGIAN OFFICIALS TODAY, THE EMBASSY WILL MAKE APPOINTMENTS AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL TO ARGUE FOR THE YF-16.

IN THE MEANTIME, THE DUTCH STATE SECRETARY FOR DEFENSE, STEMERDINK, TOLD A US EMBASSY OFFICIAL ON FEBRUARY 7 THAT FORCES LED BY DEFENSE MINISTER VREDELING ARE NOW SWINGING TOWARD THE MIRAGE AS A MEANS OF SAVING THE "EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY." THOSE FAVORING THE MIRAGE ARE ALSO ARGUING THAT THE YF-16 WILL EVENTUALLY COST MORE IN GUILDERS THAN THE MIRAGE. STEMERDINK SAID THAT VREDELING'S ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE MIRAGE WERE PERSUASIVE AND MIGHT EVENTUALLY PROVE IRRESISTABLE. AWARE OF THE ADVERSE EFFECT OF DUTCH PURCHASE OF THE MIRAGE ON US-DUTCH RELATIONS, STEMERDINK SAID HE HAS

\*\*\*\*\* WHSR COMMENT \*\*\*\*\*

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DRAWN UP A PLAN CALLING FOR THE PURCHASE OF AN UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF US F-5ES, A MUCH CHEAPER PLANE THAN EITHER THE MIRAGE OR FX YF-16, WITH THE SAVINGS APPLIED TO HELPING THE "EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY"  
-- READ MIRAGE.

AMBASSADOR GOULD OBSERVES THAT STEMERDINK'S FALLBACK TO THE F-5E MARKS A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN HIS PREVIOUS VIEWS AND MAY REFLECT HIS BELIEF THAT THE ONLY WAY TO PREVENT THE DUTCH FROM BUYING THE MIRAGE AND ASSURE PURCHASE OF AN AMERICAN PLANE IS TO SETTLE FOR THE F-5E. ACCORDING TO THE AMBASSADOR, WHATEVER STEMERDINK'S MOTIVES, HIS REMARKS INDICATE THAT THE MIRAGE IS A REAL POSSIBILITY FOR THE NETHERLANDS AND THAT THOSE IN THE GOVERNMENT FAVORING A US PLANE MAY BE THINKING INCREASINGLY IN TERMS OF THE F-5E. (GATES)

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