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TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NO 507 OF 23 OCTOBER 84.
INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK, PARIS, CBFC.
INFO ROUTINE WASHINGTON, BONN, ROME, ATHENS, ANKARA, UKDEL NATO,
MODUK (DSC, DS11).
INFO SAVING UKREP BRUSSELS.

FRENCH ARMS SALES TO THE GREEK CYPRIOTS.

SUMMARY.

UNFCYP'S REPORT ON CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE FRENCH ARMS SALES TO THE GREEK CYPRIOT NATIONAL GUARD CONSISTENT WITH OTHER REPORTS OF FRENCH READINESS TO SELL WEAPONS INCLUDING TANKS AND AIR DEFENCE MISSILES. FRENCH ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE MILITARY BALANCE FAIL TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF AN ARMS BUILD-UP IN CYPRUS.

1. HOLGER'S COMMENT ABOUT FRENCH ARMS SALES (PARA 6 OF HUMFREY'S TELELETTER OF 19 OCTOBER) WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY PROMPTED BY A REPORT TO NEW YORK ON 17 OCTOBER BY THE UNFCYP FORCE COMMANDER, THE DETAILS OF WHICH WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN IN CONFIDENCE BY AN OFFICER IN THE BRITISH CONTINGENT (PLEASE PROTECT).
2. THE REPORT NOTED THAT 40 FRENCH ARMoured PERSONNEL CARRIERS HAD ARRIVED IN CYPRUS OUT OF A TOTAL ORDER OF 84 AND THAT DELIVERY OF THE REST WAS IMMINENT : ALSO THAT THE FRENCH HAD SOLD THE GREEK CYPRIOT NATIONAL GUARD (GCNG) A FAST PATROL BOAT EQUIPPED WITH BOFORS GUN, 20MM CANNON AND TWO MACHINE GUNS. THE REPORT WENT ON TO IDENTIFY THREE DEFICIENCIES IN THE GCNG INVENTORY, WHICH THE

BOFORS GUN, 20MM CANNON AND TWO MACHINE GUNS. THE REPORT WENT ON TO IDENTIFY THREE DEFICIENCIES IN THE GCNG INVENTORY, WHICH THE FRENCH WERE BIDDING TO FILL :

- A) ANTI AIRCRAFT DEFENCE, FOR WHICH THE FRONT RUNNER APPEARED TO BE CROTALE, WHICH GREINDL BELIEVED WAS DISCUSSED WITH THE FRENCH DEFENCE MINISTER DURING HIS RECENT VISIT. IN GREINDL'S VIEW IT WOULD TAKE THE GCNG ONE TO TWO YEARS TO DEVELOP A FULLY INTEGRATED AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM, THOUGH UNITS COULD BE READY TO TAKE THE FIELD WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE EQUIPMENT.
- B) TANKS. AN ORDER FOR 50 WAS BEING CONSIDERED, THE LEADING CONTENDER AGAIN BEING THE FRENCH AMX 30 (WE HAVE ALSO HAD REPORTS OF THE AMX 13 BEING CONSIDERED). IF NOT OBTAINED DIRECT FROM FRANCE, THE TANKS COULD BE TRANSFERRED FROM SUPPLIES HELD BY THE GREEK ARMY. VENIAMIN HAD INDICATED TO GREINDL THAT THERE WAS NO INTENTION TO OBTAIN TANKS "FOR THE TIME BEING" BUT THAT THEY WOULD BE AVAILABLE AT SHORT NOTICE IF IT WAS DECIDED TO OBTAIN THEM.
- C) HELICOPTERS. THE MAIN CONTENDERS FOR THE TWO OR THREE REQUIRED BY THE GCNG WERE THE ITALIAN BELL AND THE FRENCH DAUPLINE 2, THE FRENCH BEING FAVOURITE.

2. GREINDL'S REPORT ADDED THAT THE FORMER FRENCH AMBASSADOR (WHO LEFT EARLY THIS MONTH) MADE NO SECRET IN PRIVATE OF FRANCE'S READINESS TO SUPPLY WHATEVER ARMS WERE REQUESTED SO LONG AS THE BUYER WAS ABLE TO PAY FOR THEM. GREINDL CONCLUDED THAT, WHILE THE ARMS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME HAD ENHANCED GCNG MORALE, IT DID NOT SO FAR THREATEN THE STATUS QUO IN CYPRUS AND IN HIS CONTACTS WITH THE TURKISH MILITARY LEADERS IN THE NORTH HE DETECTED A REALISTIC AND TEMPERATE ATTITUDE TO THE SITUATION. BUT IN HIS VIEW THE ACQUISITION BY THE GCNG OF MAIN BATTLE TANKS OR ANTI AIRCRAFT MISSILES CAPABLE OF LIMITING THE PRESENT TURKISH AIR SUPERIORITY WOULD BE LIKELY TO EVOKE A "MORE SERIOUS" RESPONSE FROM THE TURKISH SIDE.

4. GREINDL'S INFORMATION IS CONSISTENT WITH OTHER REPORTS THAT THE FRENCH ARE PREPARED TO SUPPLY TANKS AND ANTI AIRCRAFT MISSILES TO THE GCNG, THOUGH THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT (AS HOLGER CONSIDERED) THE GREEK CYPRIOTS WOULD GO AHEAD WITH PURCHASES OF SUCH WEAPONS ONLY IF THE CURRENT UN INITIATIVE FAILED. THE FRENCH EMBASSY HERE ARE NOT ATTEMPTING TO DENY THAT NEW FRENCH ARMS SALES COULD BE IN PROSPECT. IN CONVERSATION WITH MY DEFENCE ADVISER ON 18 OCTOBER THE FRENCH ASSISTANT MILITARY ATTACHE, WHILE NOT PREPARED TO DISCUSS DETAILS OF SALES, ARGUED FORCEFULLY THAT THERE COULD BE NO MILITARY OBJECTIONS TO ARMS SALES TO THE GREEK CYPRIOTS, SINCE THESE ONLY IMPROVED THE DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY OF THE GCNG, WHO STILL HAD A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE THEY MATCHED THE TURKS. CAPIDE WOULD NOT ACCEPT ARGUMENTS THAT A BUILD UP OF MILITARY FORCES IN THE SOUTH COULD UPSET THE PRESENT RELATIVELY STABLE SITUATION AND AT THE VERY LEAST WOULD INCREASE INTERCOMMUNAL TENSION AND THE RISK OF PREEMPTIVE OR ADVENTUROUS ACTION BY EITHER SIDE.

5. FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING UKREP BRUSSELS.
WILBERFORCE
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