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FM WASHINGTON 291430Z APR 80

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NO 1655 OF 29 APRIL

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FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY

1. DR OWEN, WHO WAS IN WASHINGTON AT THE WEEKEND IN CONNECTION WITH THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT HEADED BY OLAF PALME HAS ASKED US TO SEND YOU THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF MEETINGS HE HAD ON MONDAY WITH BRZEZINSKI AND VANCE.

2. BRZEZINSKI SPOKE ON IRAN IN TERMS WHICH MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE MINING OPTION WAS STILL OPEN, HE THOUGHT THAT THE ALLIES CERTAINLY WOULD BE CONSULTED BEFORE ANY SUCH OPERATION WAS IMPLEMENTED BUT THE DECISION ON WHETHER TO CONSULT WOULD BE FOR THE PRESIDENT TO TAKE. BRZEZINSKI WAS VERY UPSET AT THE DISPLAY OF AMERICAN BODIES IN TEHRAN AND SAID THAT THIS WOULD PROVOKE A WAVE OF ANGER IN THE UNITED STATES. DR OWEN HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT BRZEZINSKI MIGHT USE THAT INCIDENT AS AN ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF GOING AHEAD WITH MINING.

3. DR OWEN WAS TOLD SEPARATELY BY JODY POWELL THAT BRZEZINSKI WOULD DEFINITELY NOT BE THE NEXT SECRETARY OF STATE. BRZEZINSKI HIMSELF WAS CRITICAL OF VANCE FOR RESIGNING AT A TIME WHEN HE SHOULD HAVE STOOD BY THE PRESIDENT. BRZEZINSKI THOUGHT THAT VANCE WOULD HAVE BEEN JUSTIFIED IN RESIGNING AT THE TIME OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL VOTE ON ISRAEL, WHEN HE HAD BEEN MADE TO CARRY THE CAN.

4. CY VANCE CONFIRMED THAT IT WAS OPPOSITION TO THE TREND OF US POLICY ON IRAN, AND NOT JUST TO THE RESCUE ATTEMPT, THAT HAD LED HIM TO GO. HE REMAINED WHOLLY IN FAVOUR OF ECONOMIC PRESSURES ON IRAN. VANCE SAID THAT, WHILE HE WAS OPPOSED TO THE RESCUE ATTEMPT IN PRINCIPLE, HE HAD ALSO THOUGHT THE PLAN ITSELF UNWORKABLE. VANCE TOLD DR OWEN THAT THE EFFECT OF HIS RESIGNATION WOULD BE TO RULE OUT THE MILITARY (INCLUDING THE MINING) OPTION FOR WHICH THE PRESIDENT HAD "NO STOMACH". VANCE WAS VERY CLEAR ON THIS POINT AND INDICATED THAT ONE OF THE MAIN REASON FOR HIS RESIGNATION HAD BEEN TO ENSURE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION DID NOT GO DOWN THE MILITARY ROUTE. DR OWEN THOUGHT THERE WAS AN ELEMENT OF WISHLFUL THINKING IN THIS AND THAT, WHILE VANCE'S DEPARTURE WOULD BE A DETERRENT TO FURTHER MILITARY ACTION, IT WOULD NOT BE CONCLUSIVE, PARTICULARLY GIVEN BRZEZINSKI'S ATTITUDE.

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5. TWO FURTHER POINTS FROM DR OWEN'S TALK WITH BRZEZINSKI ARE:

(A) BRZEZINSKI SPOKE AGAINST THE IDEA OF SCHMIDT GOING TO MOSCOW BEFORE THE OLYMPICS, ADDING THAT A DECISION ON THIS SHOULD BE TAKEN AT THE VENICE SUMMIT; AND

(B) BRZEZINSKI IMPLIED STRONGLY THAT THE RESCUE ATTEMPT HAD RELEASED THE PRESIDENT FROM HIS SELF-DENYING ORDINANCE ON ELECTIONEERING AND THAT HE WOULD NOW BE FREE TO CAMPAIGN. DR OWEN WAS NOT SURE WHETHER THIS HAD BEEN MERELY BRZEZINSKI EXPRESSING A PERSONAL VIEW AND FOUND IT HARD TO SEE HOW, LOGICALLY, THE RESCUE ATTEMPT COULD BE USED AS JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PRESIDENT GETTING ON TO THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL.

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