

# INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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DE RUEHLL 289C 3471315  
ZNY SSSSS  
P 131302Z  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY (2695)  
INFO RUEKDA/DEFENCE DEPT PRIORITY 321  
STATE GRNC  
BT  
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EXDIS

SUBJECT: WILSON VISIT AND UK DEFENCE REVIEW

PROTECT SOURCE OF FOLLOWING REPORT.

IN DISCUSSION WITH EMBOFF FOR HIS "BRACKGROUND UNDERSTANDING". DEPDEFMIN AND ARMYMIN MULLEY TOLD EMBOFF BRITISH MINISTERS NOT CERTAIN WHAT WILSON WILL SAY TO PRESIDENT DURING DISCUSSIONS ON UK DEFENCE REVIEW. WILSON HAS BEEN FULLY BRIEFED ON RANGE OF UK COMMITMENTS AND, ACCORDING TO MULLEY, APPEARS TO GO ALONG WITH HEALEY'S ARGUMENTS FOR "MAJOR REDUCTIONS". THE ARGUMENTS FOR

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REDUCTIONS ARE BASED ON ECONOMIC GROUNDS (NEED TO SAVE FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND TO MEET 2 BILLION POUND TARGET) AND POLITICAL REALITIES OF GEOGRAPHIC AREA INVOLVED. EMBOFF QUERIED MULLEY AS TO WHAT CONSTITUTED "MAJOR REDUCTIONS", WHERE WERE THEY LIKELY TO OCCUR, AND WHAT WOULD THEN BE CHARACTER OF BRITISH MILITARY PRESENCE, IF ANY. MULLEY REPLIED SUCH REDUCTIONS WERE SLATED TO TAKE PLACE IN MEDITERRANEAN ARE, MIDDLE EAST AND FAR EAST. COMMENT: HE MADE NO MENTION OF NATO AREA AS TARGET FOR CUTS.) THERE WAS DEFINITE INTENTION TO KEEP A MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE FAR EAST AND MIDDLE EAST, BUT NO ONE HAD DEFINED "MAJOR REDUCTIONS". HEALEY APPARENTLY THINKING IN TERMS OF MAINLY AIR AND NAVAL MILITARY PRESENCE WITH SIGNIFICANT CUTS IN GROUND FORCES SINCE ARMY MANPOWER OVERSEAS A HEAVY BUDGETARY AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE ITEM. FURTHERMORE, HEALEY, WITH EXAMPLES OF BORNEO AND VIET NAM IN MIND, DOES NOT WANT TO TAKE CHANCE "GETTING BAGGED DOWN" WITH LAND FORCES IN SITUATION WHERE THIS MIGHT EVENTUALLY REQUIRE LARGE REINFORCEMENTS. HEALEY APPEARS BE THINKING ONLY OF SMALL ARMY GARRISONS IN THEATRE OR SMALL GROUND FORCE CONTINGENTS AFLOAT WHICH WOULD, IN THEORY, BE REINFORCED FROM THE UK STRATEGIC RESERVE OR THE BAOR. MULLEY REPORTS THAT THIS LINE

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IS PROVING ATTRACTIVE TO WILSON.

MULLEY TOLD EMBOFF HE CONTINUING ARGUE AGAINST HEALEY'S CONCEPT OF NATURE OF BRITISH MILITARY PRESENCE AND DRAWING HEAVILY ON "BLOOD VERSUS MONEY" DISCUSSION WHICH TOOK PLACE DURING MCNAMARA/BALL/STEWART/HEALEY TALKS OF NOVEMBER 26. MULLEY POINTED OUT SOME PLANS BEING STUDIED BY HEALEY WOULD REDUCE ARMY AUTHORIZED STRENGTH BY FIFTY THOUSAND (FROM 180,000 TO 130,000). CONSIDERATION ALSO BEING GIVEN TO REDUCING AND POSSIBLY PHASING OUT BRIGADE OF GURKHAS.

MULLEY FEELS APPROVAL OF SIGNIFICANT CUTS IN ARMY MAN-POWER WOULD MAKE UK MILITARY PRESENCE EAST OF SUEZ A HOLLOW GESTURE. HE THINKS WILSON, IN HIS TALK WITH PRESIDENT ON EAST OF SUEZ, WILL TALK IN GENERAL TERMS BUT SEEK TO PREPARE US FOR REDUCTIONS. WILSON NOT LIKELY TO BE PRECISE ABOUT EXTENT OF REDUCTIONS AND WHERE EXACT CHARACTER OF MILITARY PRESENCE OR DEPLOYMENTS LEAVING THESE SUBJECTS FOR LATER MINISTERIAL AND OFFICIAL LEVEL TALKS.

COMMENT: MULLY, AS ARMYMIN, HAS NATURAL DESIRE PROTECT SIZE OF ARMY AND ITS ROLE. HIS CONCERN OVER ARMY MANPOWER REDUCTIONS BASED ON MORE THAN PAROCHIAL CONSIDERATIONS. THOUGH NEVER AN

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EAST OF SUEZ MAN, HE HAS COME TO FEEL THAT COOPERATION IN THIS AREA WHICH THE US IS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT OF A VIABLE, AND BENEFICIAL TO THE UK, RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US. HE DOES NOT AGREE WITH HEALEY'S TENTATIVE THINKING THAT THIS COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP CAN BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT MANPOWER CONTRIBUTIONS.

GP-3. BRUCE.  
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