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GRS 550A
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FM COPENHAGEN 201030Z OCT 83
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 230 OF 20 OCTOBER
INFO ROUTINE UKDEL NATO OSLO BONN WASHINGTON

DENMARK: INF

SUMMARY

1. SCHLUETER'S MINORITY GOVERNMENT WILL SHORTLY FACE RENEWED PRESSURE FROM THE FOLKETING AND PROBABLY BE FORCED TO ACCEPT A RESOLUTION REQUIRING IT TO WORK ACTIVELY AGAINST THE INSTALLATION OF PERSHING III AND CRUISE MISSILES IN EUROPE. THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO TO HELP SCHLUETER RESIST THIS PRESSURE; BUT WE SHOULD PUT DOWN A MARKER BEFORE ELLEMANN JENSEN VISITS YOU ON 4 NOVEMBER.

DETAIL

2. ASSUMING THAT THE GOVERNMENT SURVIVES (MY TELNO 229) IT WILL SHORTLY FACE TWO PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THE FIRST WILL BE ON 3 NOVEMBER OCCASIONED BY QUESTIONS ABOUT INF TALKS FROM THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE LEFT WING SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S PARTY. THE SECOND WILL BE ON 10 NOVEMBER AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S PARTY AND WILL COVER WIDER ISSUES OF NUCLEAR STRATEGY. THERE MAY BE A LEFT WING ATTEMPT IN THE SECOND DEBATE TO FORCE AN EXTENSION OF THE BAN ON STATIONING OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON DANISH SOIL TO WARTIME AS WELL AS PEACETIME.

3. THE GOVERNMENT EXPECT THE DEBATE ON 3 NOVEMBER TO BE THE MOST DIFFICULT. ELLEMANN JENSEN AND DEFENCE MINISTER ENGELL HAVE BEEN CONDUCTING A ROBUST PUBLIC CAMPAIGN ON INF, BUT THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT PARTY REMAINS OPPOSED TO INF DEPLOYMENT. AS ELLEMANN JENSEN HAS WARNED YOU (ATHENS TELNO 516) HE DOES NOT EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO HOLD EVEN THE PRESENT UNSATISFACTORY DANISH LINE ON INF. SENIOR OFFICIALS EXPECT THE MINORITY GOVERNMENT ON 3 NOVEMBER TO HAVE TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS A COMPROMISE RESOLUTION WHICH WILL MOVE THEM ONE FURTHER STEP DOWN THE SLOPE TOWARDS OUTRIGHT OPPOSITION TO INF DEPLOYMENT. THE RESOLUTION WOULD PROBABLY DRAW ON THE EARLIER ONE OF 26 MAY (MY TELNO 118) BUT DEMAND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WORK FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION RATHER THAN MERELY PUT IT FORWARD IN NATO. THE GOVERNMENT, VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE DIFFICULTIES THIS WILL CREATE FOR THE ALLIES, ESPECIALLY THE GERMANS, WILL DO THEIR UTMOST TO BLUNT THE LANGUAGE. BUT THEY HAVE NO MAJORITY ON DEFENCE MATTERS AND REMAIN UNLIKELY TO GIVE A HIGHER PRIORITY TO HOLDING THE LINE ON INF THAN TO THEIR OWN SURVIVAL.

4. THE GOVERNMENT HOPES THAT A COMPROMISE WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AT THE DEBATE ON 3 NOVEMBER WILL ENABLE THEM TO KEEP THE DEBATE ON 10 NOVEMBER IN LOW KEY AND HARMLESS.

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5. ELLEMANN JENSEN AND HIS COLLEAGUES ARE DETERMINEDLY ROBUST IN FIGHTING FOR THE DOUBLE DECISION BUT THEY CANNOT CHANGE POLITICAL ARITHMETIC. MY GERMAN AND AMERICAN COLLEAGUES ARE LIKELY TO BE ADVISING THEIR GOVERNMENTS TO PLAY IT COOL: THE ALLIES SHOULD NOT FLATTER THE FOLKETING BY APPEARING TO TAKE ITS, IN THIS CASE PERIPHERAL, VIEWS TOO SERIOUSLY. I AGREE WITH THIS ADVICE BUT I BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD NEVERTHELESS PUT DOWN A MARKER IN ADVANCE OF THE DEBATE THAT A FURTHER WEAKENING OF THE DANISH POSITION WILL CAUSE DIFFICULTIES FOR US AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE. WE COULD DO THIS AT THE NPG MEETING IN OTTAWA ON 27/28 OCTOBER, WHICH DEFENCE MINISTER ENGELL WILL ATTEND.

6. ELLEMANN JENSEN'S TALKS WITH YOU ON 4 NOVEMBER WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION FULLY. HE SHOULD BE PRESSED TO EXPLAIN HOW HE PROPOSES TO HANDLE ANY NEW INSTRUCTION FROM THE FOLKETING WITHOUT ROCKING THE BOAT IN NATO. HE WILL ALSO EXPECT YOU TO UNDERLINE THE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS OF ANY ATTEMPT AT THE DEBATE ON 10 NOVEMBER TO CHANGE DENMARK'S POLICY ON NUCLEAR STRATEGY.

MELLON

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