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FM FCO 061530Z SEPT 84

TO PRIORITY WELLINGTON

TELEGRAM NUMBER 220 OF 6 SEPTEMBER

INFO ROUTINE CANBERRA, WASHINGTON, MODUK (DS5, DS11)  
SHIPS VISITS TO NEW ZEALAND.

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1. MINISTERS HAVE AGREED TO A REQUEST FROM THE AMERICANS THAT WE SHOULD LEND SOME SUPPORT TO THEIR (AND AUSTRALIAN) EFFORTS TO TRY TO PERSUADE THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT TO REVERSE ITS POLICY OF BANNING NUCLEAR POWERED AND NUCLEAR ARMED SHIPS FROM ITS PORTS AND WATERS. WE DO NOT WANT THIS TO BECOME A MAJOR ISSUE IN UK/NEW ZEALAND RELATIONS AND WE HAVE TAKEN ACCOUNT OF THE JUDGEMENT IN PARAGRAPH 6 OF YOUR TELEGRAM NO. 264. NONETHELESS WE INTEND USING APPROPRIATE CONTACTS, EG MY DISCUSSIONS WITH MR LANGE IN NEW YORK ON 25 SEPTEMBER, THE LATTER'S VISIT TO LONDON AT THE END OF THE MONTH, AND LADY YOUNG'S VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND IN OCTOBER, TO PURSUE THE MATTER GENTLY. WE ALSO SEE ADVANTAGE IN YOUR MENTIONING OUR CONCERN IN THE MEANTIME TO MR LANGE OR ANOTHER APPROPRIATE SENIOR NEW ZEALAND MINISTER. YOU SHOULD NOT, HOWEVER, MAKE IT THE SUBJECT OF A SPECIAL CALL. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT NOT TO CREATE ANY IMPRESSION OF AMERICAN ORCHESTRATION AGAINST WELLINGTON.

2. IN SPEAKING, YOU SHOULD DRAW ON THE FOLLOWING:-

I) GRATEFUL FOR CLARIFICATION OF NEW ZEALAND'S PLANS TO BAN VISITS BY NUCLEAR POWERED AND NUCLEAR ARMED SHIPS. WHAT WOULD BE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR VISITS BY RN VESSELS?

II) IF THE PLANS ENTAILED GOING BEYOND GENERAL STATEMENTS ABOUT THE UNDESIRABILITY OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR PRESENCE, VISITS BY ALL RN VESSELS WOULD EFFECTIVELY BE RULED OUT BECAUSE OF OUR LONG STANDING POLICY NEITHER TO CONFIRM NOR DENY THE PRESENCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN ANY PLACE AT ANY TIME. WE CANNOT BREACH THIS BECAUSE OF WIDER SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS:

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III) NUCLEAR POWERED RN VESSELS RARELY VISIT THE PACIFIC BUT WE WOULD REGRET A BAN ON THEM. IF SUCH A VESSEL WERE IN A POSITION TO VISIT WE HOPE THAT THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT COULD ACCEPT A STATEMENT VOUCHING FOR ITS SAFETY:

IV) A BAN MAY HAVE ADVERSE IMPLICATIONS FOR ANZUS AND COULD ENCOURAGE OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES TO TAKE A SIMILAR LINE. THIS COULD AFFECT WESTERN UNITY AND WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY PLEASE THE RUSSIANS. A BAN WOULD THUS HAVE A DE-STABILISING EFFECT AND WOULD NOT BRING PEACEFUL DISARMAMENT ANY CLOSER:

V) WE GREATLY VALUE THE FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR NAVIES AND THE OCCASIONAL VISITS BY RN SHIPS TO NEW ZEALAND, SUCH AS THOSE OF INVINCIBLE AND ACCOMPANYING SHIPS LAST NOVEMBER. WE HOPE THAT A SOLUTION CAN BE FOUND SO THAT RN (AND US NAVY) SHIPS CAN CONTINUE TO VISIT.

3. WE ARE CONFIRMING TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY HERE THAT WE SHALL USE APPROPRIATE SENIOR CONTACTS WITH THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT TO PURSUE THIS QUESTION. WASHINGTON MAY WISH ALSO TO INFORM STATE DEPARTMENT OF THIS BUT SHOULD NOT, AT THIS STAGE, GIVE DETAILS OF THE LINE WE ARE TAKING. IF ASKED, CANBERRA MAY SPEAK SIMILARLY TO THE AUSTRALIANS.

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