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addendum

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee
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Installation of a new antenna (Pluto II)
in the Sovereign Base Areas
(Akrotiri, Cyprus)

Supplementary information on the operation
of the Pluto Antennae
SBAA Headquarters

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Secretariat Memorandum
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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION OF THE PLUTO ANTENNAE

Radiation Risks

Independent tests in 2001 by experts from France Telecom, the Republic of Cyprus's Ministry of Communications and Works, and the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority showed that emissions from the existing antennae were at least 76 times smaller than the limits set by the European Union. Similar or higher levels of emissions can be found around commercial broadcasting antennae in the Republic (indeed the strongest emissions recorded in Akrotiri village during the 2001 tests came not from a British antenna but from the broadcasts of a Cypriot Radio station). Measurements taken by our own monitoring equipment since then have corroborated the results of the earlier tests, including since both antennae began operating together earlier this year. It should also be noted that emission levels from the new antenna are lower than those for the more extensive system of masts and aerials they replaced.

We have been involved in a regular dialogue with representatives of Akrotiri village as part of our efforts to allay their understandable concerns about emissions. As part of this effort we have installed equipment in the village to allow further monitoring of emission levels as part of a joint arrangement with the RoC's Ministry of Communications and Works. The operation of this equipment is governed by the Protocol signed by the British High Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 22 March 2004. Under the Protocol, the Ministry of Communications and Works has direct access to the raw data from the equipment which they pass to the Akrotiri Community Council (ACC). The Protocol also allows the Ministry of Communications and Works to perform independent electromagnetic radiation measurements in Akrotiri Village without the prior permission of the SBAA.

Health Issues

As a further measure of reassurance to local residents, the British and Cypriot governments have also commissioned a major epidemiological study into the potential impact of the antennae on the health of the Akrotiri villagers. The study is being conducted by internationally renowned experts from the Bristol University and is expected to report next spring. The report will be subject to peer review.

Emissions Monitoring Equipment

The emissions monitoring equipment was removed from Akrotiri Village community centre at the end of July to allow it to be recalibrated. This process needs to be carried-out every two years in order to maintain the integrity of the system and the reliability of the data. It was reinstalled on

24 September after an absence of only eight weeks. The fact that the equipment needed to be recalibrated so soon after its installation in May was due to delays in getting permission from the ACC to install it in the Community Centre. The equipment had actually been in Cyprus, ready to install, for almost a year previously. It should also be noted that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Communications and Works were kept fully informed of our plans, and that the ACC agreed to its temporary removal for the recalibration to take place.

Simultaneous Operation of Antennae

Although the British High Commission did state in August 2001 that the two Pluto antennae would not operate together, changing operational requirements since 11 September 2001 and recent technical developments have meant that the Pluto system now operates as a whole, with the two main antennae being used simultaneously. However, the system continues to transmit the same maximum power and have the same maximum gain as before. We notified the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of this development in December 2003.

The SBAA continue to monitor emission levels at the Pluto site and in the surrounding area. All our readings show that even when the two antennae are operating together, emission levels remain well within the safety limits set by the EU, and are also consistent with the independent emissions measurements carried out by France Telecom in 2001.