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GRS 408

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FM MOSCOW 101250Z JUN 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 614 OF +0 JUN

INFO PRIORITY MODUK (FOR DUS(P), AUS D STAFF AND DS17),
WASHINGTON, UKDEL NATO

INFO ROUTINE PARIS, BONN, OTHER NATO POSTS, SOFIA, BELGRADE,
BUCHAREST, BUDAPEST, EAST BERLIN, WARSAW, PRAGUE

WASHINGTON TEL NO 1593: START

1. THE FIRST SOVIET PUBLIC RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT REAGAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON START CAME IN AN AUTHORITATIVE TASS COMMENT ON 9 JUNE (PRAVDA 10 JUNE).
2. THIS DISMISSED THE PROCLAIMED NEW US FLEXIBILITY: IN NO WAY DID IT AFFECT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE AMERICAN POSITION WHICH CONTINUED TO BE DIRECTED AT ACHIEVING MILITARY SUPERIORITY AND SOVIET UNILATERAL DISARMAMENT. THE US ADMINISTRATION HAD FIRST ENBARKED UPON PLANS TO BUILD UP ITS STRATEGIC ARMS, AND ONLY THEN ON TALK ABOUT SO-CALLED FLEXIBILITY AND A NEW APPROACH. THIS INDICATED NO STRIVING FOR A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT. ON THE CONTRARY, REAGAN'S STATEMENT REVEALED THE WISH TO UNDERMINE THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY AND EQUAL SECURITY ON WHICH THE SALT 1 AND 2 NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN BASED. IN PARTICULAR THE ESSENCE OF HIS SO-CALLED INITIATIVE WAS STILL FIRST OF ALL TO LIMIT THE NUMBER OF MISSILES, ESPECIALLY LAND-BASED, WHICH CONSTITUTED THE CORE OF SOVIET STRATEGIC DEFENCE. THE AMERICAN READINESS TO RAISE THE CEILING ON THE TOTAL NUMBER OF MISSILES WAS A MOVE TOWARDS TOUGHENING THEIR POSITION IN CONNECTION WITH PLANS FOR TWO NEW ICBMS.
3. REAGAN HAD IGNORED SOVIET PROPOSALS. HE HAD GIVEN NO REACTION TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT OF 28 MAY, WHICH PUT FORWARD CONCRETE WAYS TOWARDS ACCORD IN GENEVA. TASS SAID IN CONCLUSION THAT HIS REFERENCES TO SOVIET INTRANSIGENCE AND TO HIS FIRM COMMITMENT TO TAKE ANY NECESSARY MEASURES TO ACHIEVE SIGNIFICANT REDUCTIONS WERE 'WORDS AND NOTHING MORE'.

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4. THE CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT REAGAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT IS CURTLY PHRASED AND SHOWS NO SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO GIVE THE AMERICANS ANY BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT. THERE IS NO EXPLICIT MENTION OF REAGAN'S CALL FOR A SOVIET RESPONSE OR OF HIS WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER THEIR IDEAS. NOR DOES TASS SUGGEST SOVIET PREPAREDNESS TO EXPLORE THE NEW AMERICAN APPROACH AT THE RESUMED NEGOTIATIONS. EVEN SO, THE TASS COMMENT IS NOT WHOLLY CATEGORICAL IN ITS REJECTION OF REAGAN'S MOVE. IT AMOUNTS LARGELY TO A CRITIQUE OF ALLEGED US INTENTIONS RATHER THAN TO DETAILED ANALYSIS OF START PROBLEMS. IT DOES NOT MENTION ANY FIGURES FOR REDUCED LEVELS, OR THE QUESTIONS OF THROW WEIGHT AND "BUILD DOWN". ONCE AGAIN (CF NY TEL 504) IT SEEKS TO PORTRAY THE SOVIET STATEMENT OF 28 MAY AS CONSTRUCTIVE.

SUTHERLAND

(Repetition to REYKJAVIK
referred for departmental decision,
repeated as requested to other posts.)

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