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FM WASHINGTON 042210Z

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 2867 OF 4 OCTOBER 1983

AND TO IMMEDIATE MODUK (FOR DUS(POL), AUS (D STAFF), DS17).

INFO IMMEDIATE UKDEL NATO.

PRIORITY BONN, MOSCOW, PARIS.

START

1. AS ANTICIPATED, THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED THIS AFTERNOON HIS INTENTION TO PURSUE THE QUOTE BUILD-UP UNQUOTE CONCEPT AS A WAY OF HELPING TO ACHIEVE THE SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTIONS IN STRATEGIC SYSTEMS WHICH IS THE OBJECT OF THE US START PROPOSAL. THE PRESIDENT EMPHASISED THAT:

A) THE US WILL ACCEPT ANY EQUITABLE, VERIFIABLE AGREEMENT THAT STABILISES FORCES AT LOWER LEVELS THAN CURRENTLY EXIST:

B) THE US HAS SHOWN FLEXIBILITY IN DEALING WITH THE DESTRUCTIVE CAPABILITY OF BALLISTIC MISSILES, INCLUDING THEIR THROW-WEIGHT.

2. THE PRESIDENT ADDED THAT THE US WOULD INTRODUCE A QUOTE BUILD-DOWN UNQUOTE PROPOSAL DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE STABILISING SYSTEMS, INCLUDING THE REDUCTION OF BALLISTIC MISSILE WARHEADS AND A PARALLEL BUILD-DOWN FOR BOMBERS. THE US WOULD PROPOSE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A US-SOVIET WORKING GROUP IN THE GENEVA TALKS. THE US WILL BE PREPARED TO EXPLORE WAYS FURTHER TO LIMIT THE SIZE AND CAPABILITY OF ALCM FORCES, IN EXCHANGE FOR RECIPROCAL SOVIET FLEXIBILITY ON MATTERS OF CONCERN TO THE US. IN SEEKING LIMITS ON THE DESTRUCTIVE CAPABILITY OF MISSILES, THE US RECOGNISES THAT THE SOVIET UNION WILL SEEK LIMITS ON BOMBERS IN EXCHANGE. QUOTE THERE WILL HAVE TO BE TRADE-OFFS AND THE US IS PREPARED TO MAKE THEM, SO LONG AS THEY RESULT IN A MORE STABLE BALANCE OF FORCES UNQUOTE. THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENT OF JIM WOLSEY, FORMER NSC STAFF MEMBER AND UNDER SECRETARY OF THE NAVY IN THE LAST DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION, TO JOIN THE U.S. START DELEGATION IN GENEVA.

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3. IN FURTHER GUIDANCE THE WHITE HOUSE STATED THAT THE QUOTE BUILD-DOWN UNQUOTE PROPOSAL WOULD INCLUDE:

A) A PROVISION LINKING REDUCTIONS TO MODERNISATION USING VARIABLE RATIOS WHICH IDENTIFY HOW MANY EXISTING NUCLEAR WARHEADS MUST BE WITHDRAWN AS NEW WARHEADS OF VARIOUS TYPES ARE DEPLOYED:

B) A PROVISION CALLING FOR A GUARANTEED ANNUAL PERCENTAGE BUILD-DOWN (AN APPROXIMATELY FIVE PER CENT MANDATORY BUILD-DOWN PER YEAR):

C) THE REDUCTIONS WOULD BE PACED BY WHICHEVER OF THE ABOVE RULES PRODUCED THE GREATER REDUCTIONS.

4. PLEASE SEE MIFT.

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MY TELNOS 2853 AND 2854 AND MIPT : START

1. IN HIS STATEMENT THE PRESIDENT EMPHASIZED POTENTIAL US FLEXIBILITY ON THE QUESTION OF THROW-WEIGHT. IN THE LAST ROUND OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, ROWNY TOLD THE SOVIET DELEGATION THAT THE US WAS PREPARED TO DROP THE 110/210 SUB-LIMITS FOR MEDIUM AND HEAVY ICBMS AND THE 2,500 SUB-LIMIT FOR LAND-BASED ICBMS IF THE SOVIET UNION WAS PREPARED TO DISCUSS DIRECT LIMITS ON THROW-WEIGHT. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STATEMENT - ALTHOUGH THIS WAS NOT MADE EXPLICIT - WAS THAT THE US WOULD NOT NECESSARILY INSIST ON EQUALITY IN MISSILE THROW-WEIGHT.

2. YOU WILL NOTE THE PASSAGE IN THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT WHICH STATES THAT THE US IS PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN MISSILES AND BOMBERS. THE NSC AND STATE DEPARTMENT EXPERTS REGARD THIS AS THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURE OF THE WHOLE STATEMENT. FOR THIS, POTENTIALLY, MARKS A DEPARTURE FROM THE REQUIREMENT SO FAR FOR EQUAL LIMITS ON MISSILES AND EQUAL LIMITS ON AIRCRAFT BACK TOWARDS POSSIBLE TRADE-OFFS, OF THE KIND CENTRAL TO THE SALT II NEGOTIATIONS, BETWEEN THE SOVIET ADVANTAGE IN MISSILES AND MISSILE THROW-WEIGHT AND THE US ADVANTAGE IN STRATEGIC BOMBERS. THERE WILL NOW BE INTER-AGENCY DISCUSSION OF ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF DEVISING SUCH POTENTIAL TRADE-OFFS.

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