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INFO IMMEDIATE UKDEL NATO  
INFO ROUTINE MOSCOW, PARIS, BONN, ROME, BRUSSELS, THE HAGUE

GENEVA TALKS : SOVIET COUNTER PROPOSALS

1. PLEASE PASS THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM ME TO SHULTZ:  
BEGINS

I WAS MOST GRATEFUL FOR YOUR MESSAGE OF 29 SEPTEMBER ABOUT THE MEETINGS WHICH YOU AND PRESIDENT REAGAN HAD WITH MR SHEVARDNADZE. I HAVE ALSO NOW SEEN A MORE DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE SOVIET 'COUNTER-PROPOSALS' WHICH WERE RECENTLY TABLED IN GENEVA. IT MAY BE USEFUL TO LET YOU HAVE MY INITIAL IMPRESSIONS.

A GOOD DEAL MAY TURN ON WHETHER THE RUSSIANS HAVE CONCEDED THAT LABORATORY RESEARCH ON STRATEGIC DEFENCE IS PERMISSIBLE. THEIR POSITION STILL SEEMS TO ME TO BE AMBIGUOUS, ALTHOUGH I UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR PEOPLE ASSESS, LARGELY ON THE BASIS OF GORBACHEV'S LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT, THAT THE POINT IS CONCEDED. I CERTAINLY HOPE SO.

THE SOVIET PROPOSALS ON OFFENSIVE WEAPONS CONTAIN SEVERAL OLD CHESNUTS. SOME OF THESE ARE OBVIOUSLY OBJECTIONABLE, NOTABLY THE DEFINITION OF STRATEGIC SYSTEMS AND THE ASSOCIATED ARITHMETIC, AND THE MORATORIA ON TESTING AND INF DEPLOYMENTS. THEY SEEM TO HAVE GONE ALL THE WAY

1

SECRET

SECRET

15908 - 2

BACK TO THEIR ORIGINAL DEFINITION OF STRATEGIC SYSTEMS AS THOSE WHICH CAN HIT THE OTHER SIDE'S TERRITORY. THE PROPOSITION THAT YOUR LRINF AND CARRIER-BASED AIRCRAFT SHOULD BE INCLUDED WHILST COMPARABLE SOVIET SYSTEMS ARE NOT IS CLEARLY UNACCEPTABLE, AND GORBACHEV MUST KNOW IT IS. BUT AS YOU SAY, IT IS ENCOURAGING THAT THEY HAVE BEGUN TO CONCENTRATE ON THE CENTRAL ISSUES. IT IS ONE MEASURE OF PROGRESS THAT THEY ACTUALLY HAVE COME UP WITH THEIR OWN PROPOSALS AND THEREBY COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC IDEAS.

THE SITUATION OVER INF SEEMS FROM WHAT I HAVE SEEN TO BE UNCLEAR. ARE THE RUSSIANS PROPOSING TO MERGE THE STRATEGIC AND INF NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH COULD CONCEDE THE PRINCIPLE THAT US LRINF DEPLOYMENTS ARE PERMISSIBLE? OR ARE THEY STICKING TO THE LINE THAT SOVIET INF MISSILES MUST BE EQUATED WITH BRITISH AND FRENCH STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCES? THEY MAY OF COURSE BE AIMING AT BOTH. THE PROPOSAL FOR DIALOGUE WITH THE FRENCH AND OURSELVES, FOR WHICH THE MOTIVE SEEMS TO ME TO BE TRANSPARENT, SUGGESTS THAT THEY REMAIN INTENT ON THE LATTER OBJECTIVE. BUT I AM RELUCTANT TO PLAY INTO SOVIET HANDS AND TURN THE PROPOSAL DOWN WHEN IT HAS NOT EVEN BEEN MADE TO US DIRECT - MEGAPHONE DIPLOMACY EXCLAM. I SHOULD WELCOME YOUR VIEWS.

THERE IS NOW, AS YOU RIGHTLY SAY, A CHANCE FOR YOU TO ENGAGE THE SOVIET UNION IN A SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATION AND TO DRAW THEM OUT ON THE DETAIL. IT WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO SHOW THAT, BY THE TIME OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH GORBACHEV, EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO DO THIS. PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS HAVE BEEN RAISED AND, SHOULD THEY HAVE TO BE DISAPPOINTED, IT WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT TO SHOW THAT THE RUSSIANS ALONE WERE RESPONSIBLE. YOU HAVE MADE IT CLEAR EVER SINCE THE GENEVA TALKS RESUMED IN MARCH THAT THE US NEGOTIATING TEAM HAVE THE NECESSARY FLEXIBILITY IN THEIR INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPOND IN THE EVENT OF A SERIOUS INDICATION OF SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE. I KNOW THAT YOU ARE ALREADY CONSIDERING WITH MAX KAMPELMAN AND HIS TEAM

2

SECRET

SECRET

15908 - 2

HOW TO DEPLOY EXPANDED AMERICAN PROPOSALS WHICH RETAIN THE NEGOTIATING INITIATIVE AND PREVENT THE RUSSIANS FROM MASQUERADING AS THE ONLY ONES TO HAVE MADE A MAJOR INITIATIVE IN ADVANCE OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH GORBACHEV. I HOPE THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DEPLOY THESE IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE: AND THAT YOU MAY THINK IT WORTHWHILE TO FOLLOW-UP SOME OF THE IDEAS OUTLINED IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER OF 12 SEPTEMBER TO THE PRESIDENT.

GORBACHEV'S LINE IN PARIS SHOWS AGAIN THAT HE WILL NOT CEASE TO SEEK PROPAGANDA ADVANTAGES. TO DENY HIM THESE IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO SHOW THAT THE AMERICAN SIDE HAS BEEN WILLING TO SHOW FIRMNESS OF PURPOSE ALLIED TO FLEXIBILITY ACROSS THE NEGOTIATIONS.  
ENDS

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US/SOVIET ARMS CONTROL TALKS  
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