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UNCLASSIFIED
FM MOSCOW
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELNO 1656
OF 191500Z DECEMBER 85
INFO IMMEDIATE : WASHINGTON, UKDEL NATO
INFO PRIORITY : PARIS, BONN.

CHANGE IN SOVIET ARMS CONTROL POSITIONS

1. THERE HAVE BEEN TWO IMPORTANT PUBLIC ADJUSTMENTS IN SOVIET ARMS CONTROL POSITIONS, BOTH CARRIED IN PRAVDA OF 19 DECEMBER:-

(1) IN THE COURSE OF A MEETING WITH NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS LOWN AND CHAZOV ON 18 DECEMBER AT WHICH LOWN GAVE ENTHUSIASTIC ENDORSEMENT TO A NUMBER OF SOVIET POSITIONS AND INITIATIVES, GORBACHEV STATED THAT THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR A 50% REDUCTION IN STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS WAS ON CONDITION THAT A COMPLETE BAN WAS PLACED ON 'SPACE STRIKE WEAPONS'. HE WENT ON TO DEFINE THIS AS MEANING DROPPING (OTKAZ) THE STAR WARS PROGRAMME.

(11) AN UNSIGNED EDITORIAL ENTITLED 'NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS SHOULD BE BANNED' REVIEWS THE HISTORY OF TEST BAN TALKS AND ADDRESSES VERIFICATION. SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE AT THE TRIPARTITE TALKS. IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT THE 1974 AND 76 AGREEMENTS HAD NOT BEEN RATIFIED. IT WAS IN AN ATTEMPT TO MOVE THINGS FORWARD THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD PROPOSED A UNILATERAL TEST MORATORIUM TO 1 JANUARY 1986 AND BEYOND IF THE UNITED STATES RESPONDED. THE US HAD SOUGHT TO LEAVE THE SOVIET APPROACHES UNANSWERED AND HAD CONTINUED AN INTENSIVE PROGRAMME OF UNDERGROUND TESTS. IF THE US ADMINISTRATION WENT ON IGNORING THE CALL TO STOP TESTING THIS WOULD LEAD TO A SITUATION IN WHICH THE COMMITMENT OF THE SOVIET UNION TO A UNILATERAL MORATORIUM WOULD LOSE ITS FORCE AFTER THE DECLARED PERIOD WHICH WAS NOW NOT FAR AHEAD. AND FOR UNDERSTANDABLE REASONS 'IN THE FACE OF MILITARY PREPARATION BEYOND THE OCEAN' THE USSR COULD NOT SACRIFICE THE INTERESTS OF ITS SECURITY AND THAT OF ITS ALLIES AND FRIENDS. IT WAS NOT TOO LATE TO TAKE THE RIGHT DECISION WHICH WOULD HAVE GREAT POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND WOULD GIVE A VERY DEFINITE SIGNAL TO THE OTHER NUCLEAR POWERS. ANOTHER REAL STEP IN THE SAME DIRECTION WOULD BE THE RENEWAL OF THE TRIPARTITE TALKS. THE SOVIET UNION WAS READY TO DO THIS AT ONCE.

2. THE SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE EDITORIAL COMES AT THE END AND CONCERNS VERIFICATION. THE WEST STRESSED DIFFICULTIES IN VERIFICATION OF A TEST BAN. THE SOVIET UNION AND THE US BOTH HAD VERY MODERN NATIONAL TECHNICAL MEANS PERMITTING BOTH SIDES RELIABLY

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TO ASCERTAIN THAT A MORATORIUM WAS BEING OBSERVED. A SUPPLEMENTARY GUARANTEE WOULD BE THE RENUNCIATION, AS THE SOVIET UNION WAS DOING NOW, OF ALL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS WHETHER MILITARY OR PEACEFUL. NEITHER SIDE WOULD WANT TO INFRINGE SUCH A MORATORIUM WHICH WOULD INVOLVE CARRYING THE HEAVY BURDEN OF POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY. THE SOVIET UNION ALSO HAD SUPPORTED, IN THE INTERESTS OF THE INCREASED EFFICIENCY OF VERIFICATION IN WHICH THE USSR HAD A DIRECT INTEREST, THE IDEA OF UTILISING AN INTERNATIONAL VERIFICATION SYSTEM WHICH COULD FOR EXAMPLE USE THE SUGGESTION OF THE SIX STATES (THE DELHI DECLARATION STATES - ARGENTINA, GREECE, MEXICO, INDIA, TANZANIA, SWEDEN) TO CREATE SPECIAL STATIONS ON THEIR TERRITORY FOR OBSERVING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN AGREEMENT ON A TEST BAN.

3. THE EDITORIAL GOES ON "THE SOVIET UNION IS READY TO GO EVEN FURTHER. IF A RECIPROCAL MORATORIUM IS NOW ESTABLISHED ON NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS, IT IS IN FAVOUR OF REACHING AN AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES ON SOME MEASURES OF ON-SITE CONTROL TO REMOVE POSSIBLE DOUBTS ABOUT THE OBSERVANCE OF SUCH A MORATORIUM. IN THIS WAY THE PROBLEM OF VERIFICATION CANNOT BE REGARDED AS AN OBSTACLE TO REACHING AN AGREEMENT ABOUT A RECIPROCAL MORATORIUM IT IS TOTALLY SOLUBLE AND THE SOVIET UNION PROPOSES CONCRETE STEPS FOR ITS SOLUTION IN A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE WAY".

4. THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDES BY SAYING THAT WHAT IS NEEDED IS THE POLITICAL WILL TO MOVE TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING THE POSITIVE RESULTS OF THE GENEVA SUMMIT. THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION SHOULD NOW RESPOND TO THE WISHES OF PEOPLE WORLDWIDE FOR AGREEMENT ON A MUTUAL MORATORIUM.

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