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US/SOVIET ARMS CONTROL TALKS

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INFO PRIORITY PARIS, BONN, MOSCOW, UKDEL NATO, ROME, THE HAGUE

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MY TELNOS 153 AND 195: ARMS CONTROL: US RESPONSE TO GORBACHEV'S PROPOSALS OF 15 JANUARY

SUMMARY

1. SENIOR ADMINISTRATION TEAM TO VISIT EUROPEAN CAPITALS FOR CONSULTATIONS ON RESPONSES TO GORBACHEV. EUROPEAN VIEWS LIKELY TO BE SOUGHT ON A POSSIBLE MODIFIED US INF PROPOSAL.
2. A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE ADMINISTRATION THINKING AT A FORMATIVE STAGE AND TO MAKE CLEAR OUR VIEWS ON (A) THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR A FREEZE ON THIRD COUNTRY NUCLEAR SYSTEMS AND (B) SALT II INTERIM RESTRAINT.

DETAIL

3. A SENIOR ADMINISTRATION TEAM LED BY NITZE AND INCLUDING LEHMAN (NSC) AND THOMAS (EUROPEAN BUREAU, STATE DEPARTMENT) LEAVES WASHINGTON TODAY FOR VISITS TO LONDON (ON 5-6 FEBRUARY), PARIS, BONN, ROME, THE HAGUE AND BRUSSELS TO SEEK EUROPEAN VIEWS ON HOW THE PRESIDENT SHOULD RESPOND TO GORBACHEV'S ARMS CONTROL PROPOSALS OF 15 JANUARY. THE TEAM WILL ATTEND A NAC MEETING (PROBABLY FOLLOWED BY A MEETING OF THE SCG) IN BRUSSELS ON 12 FEBRUARY BEFORE RETURNING TO WASHINGTON.
4. WE UNDERSTAND (PLEASE PROTECT) THAT THE PRESIDENT CHAIRED AN NSC MEETING ON 3 FEBRUARY TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBLE SCOPE OF HIS RESPONSE TO GORBACHEV'S PROPOSALS. THERE WAS APPARENTLY GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THE RESPONSE SHOULD REITERATE THE ADMINISTRATION'S VIEW THAT THE FIRST PRIORITY IN NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL SHOULD BE TO ACHIEVE DEEP REDUCTIONS IN US AND SOVIET ARSENALS AS A FIRST STEP ON THE ROAD TO THE EVENTUAL ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS; AND THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD ALSO REAFFIRM HIS COMMITMENT TO SDI RESEARCH. BUT THE EARLIER INTER-AGENCY DISAGREEMENTS (MY TUR'S) ON HOW THE PRESIDENT SHOULD RESPOND TO SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF GORBACHEV'S 15 JANUARY PROPOSALS WERE APPARENTLY NOT RESOLVED. WITH WEINBERGER

PRESIDENT SHOULD RESPOND TO SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF GORBACHEV'S 15 JANUARY PROPOSALS WERE APPARENTLY NOT RESOLVED: WITH WEINBERGER ARGUING THAT THE PROPOSALS WERE LARGELY PROPAGANDA AND DID NOT CALL FOR ANY MODIFICATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S EXISTING POSITIONS IN GENEVA; AND OTHERS, NOTABLY SHULTZ, ARGUING THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD MAKE SOME MODIFICATIONS TO PRESENT US POSITIONS, PARTICULARLY ON INF. THE PRESIDENT UNDERTOOK TO REFLECT: HIS REACTIONS ARE LIKELY TO EMERGE FAIRLY QUICKLY, AND WILL THEN BE CONVEYED TO ALLIED LEADERS AND FROM THE BRIEF TO WHICH NITZE AND HIS TEAM WILL SPEAK.

5. AMONG THE SPECIFIC ISSUES ON WHICH AN INDICATION OF PRESIDENTIAL VIEWS IS NOW AWAITED ARE SOME IDEAS FOR MODIFICATIONS TO THE US START POSITION EG A PROPOSAL THAT THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD MODIFY ITS PROPOSED BAN ON MOBILE ICBMS TO INCLUDE ONLY MIRVED SYSTEMS. BUT THE CENTRAL IDEA PRESENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE PRESIDENT (SUPPORTED BY SHULTZ AND ADELMAN BUT OPPOSED BY WEINBERGER) IS THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD MAKE A NEW INF PROPOSAL TELLING GORBACHEV THAT HE ACCEPTS THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR A ZERO-ZERO SOLUTION FOR INF WITHIN RANGE OF EUROPE ON CONDITION THAT ANY SUCH AGREEMENT ALSO INCLUDES (A) A 50 PERCENT CUT IN SS20S IN SOVIET ASIA AND (B) A SOVIET COMMITMENT TO FURTHER REDUCTIONS IN ASIAN SS20S IN THE NEXT STAGE OF NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL. THE PRESIDENT MIGHT ALSO ADD, AS AN ALTERNATIVE, THE ADMINISTRATION REMAINED READY TO PROCEED WITH AN INTERIM INF AGREEMENT ON THE LINES OF THE US PROPOSAL OF 1 NOVEMBER RE 140 LAUNCHERS ON EACH SIDE WITHIN RANGE OF EUROPE AND QUOTE PROPORTIONAL UNQUOTE (IE APPROXIMATELY 50 PCNT) REDUCTIONS IN SS20S IN ASIA. IN BOTH CASES, THE PRESIDENT WOULD INSIST ON INCLUSION OF CONSTRAINTS ON SRINF.

COMMENT

6. IF THE PRESIDENT AGREES THAT THE NEW INF IDEA SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH EUROPEAN ALLIES, NITZE'S VISIT WILL OFFER AN UNUSUALLY GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE ADMINISTRATION THINKING BOTH ON THIS AND ON OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE TO GORBACHEV. CONSULTATION IS BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY: THE TERMS OF THE PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE TO GORBACHEV ARE NOT YET DOWN IN TABLETS OF STONE: INDEED NO DRAFT MESSAGE YET EXISTS, BECAUSE OF THE SHARP PENTAGON/STATE DEPARTMENT DISAGREEMENTS. OFFICIALS BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT A MESSAGE TO GORBACHEV WILL ISSUE VERY SHORTLY AFTER NITZE'S RETURN TO WASHINGTON ON 12-13 FEBRUARY.

7. NITZE'S CALLS IN LONDON ALSO PROVIDE A CHANCE:-

(A) TO CONFIRM TO THE ADMINISTRATION AT A SENIOR LEVEL THAT THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR A FREEZE ON THIRD COUNTRY NUCLEAR SYSTEMS AND A BAN ON THE TRANSFER OF STRATEGIC AND MEDIUM RANGE MISSILES IS UNACCEPTABLE TO US, AND

(B) TO EMPHASISE OUR VIEW THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD MAINTAIN HIS JUNE 1985 DECISION ON SALT II INTERIM RESTRAINT, BOTH BECAUSE ANY OTHER DECISION WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO HANDLE IN THE ALLIANCE AND BECAUSE CONTINUED US RESTRAINT WILL USEFULLY BUILD PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE US NEGOTIATING POSITION IN GENEVA.

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