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PUS'S CALL ON ARMACOST, 12 FEBRUARY: EAST-WEST RELATIONS AND ARMS CONTROL

1. THE PUS ASKED ARMACOST ON 12 FEBRUARY HOW THE US SAW THEIR DIALOGUE WITH THE RUSSIANS DEVELOPING OVER THE COMING MONTHS. HE ADDED THAT THE UK HAD WELCOMED RECENT CLOSE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE AMERICANS ON ARMS CONTROL ISSUES
2. ARMACOST SAID THAT NITZE AND ROWNY WOULD RETURN OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS. CERTAIN ALLIES HAD EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ON A VARIETY OF ASPECTS OF THE SOVIET 15 JANUARY INF PROPOSAL AND THE PROPOSED US RESPONSE. THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD NEED TO CONSOLIDATE ITS THINKING IN THE LIGHT OF THE POINTS THAT HAD BEEN MADE DURING THE NITZE/ROWNY CONSULTATIONS. IT WAS CLEAR FROM GORBACHEV'S COMMENTS TO SENATOR KENNEDY THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE TRYING TO MANUFACTURE SOME FORM OF LINKAGE BETWEEN PROGRESS ON ARMS CONTROL AND THE DATE OF THE SUMMIT. SO THE ADMINISTRATION WAS UNDER PRESSURE TO GET AN ANSWER BACK TO GORBACHEV. A PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE WOULD PROBABLY ISSUE SOON AFTER THE PRESIDENT AND OTHERS RETURNED TO WASHINGTON ON 18 FEBRUARY.
3. THE PUS SAID THAT THE ZERO-ZERO INF OPTION HAD CLEAR POLITICAL ATTRACTIONS. BUT IT RAISED CERTAIN STRATEGIC QUESTIONS. IT MIGHT BE BETTER, INSTEAD OF PROCEEDING IMMEDIATELY TO ZERO-ZERO, TO GO FOR AN INTERIM AGREEMENT WITH A 50 PER CENT CUT ON BOTH SIDES. ARMACOST SAID THAT SUCH AN APPROACH WOULD FIND SOME RESONANCE IN JAPAN WHERE CONCERN HAD BEEN EXPRESSED ABOUT THE INEQUALITY OF TREATMENT BETWEEN EUROPE AND ASIA IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL.
4. ON CTB, ARMACOST SAW CONTINUING AND MOUNTING TROUBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION ON THE HILL, ALTHOUGH THERE WOULD BE A CONTINUED NEED FOR SHELF-LIFE TESTING FOR WARHEAD THE RELIABILITY. THE PUS SAID THAT THE VERIFICATION FIG-LEAF WHICH BOTH THE US AND UK HAD BEEN USING TO FEND OFF PRESSURE FOR A CTB WOULD NOT LAST FOREVER. CONSIDERATION NEEDED TO BE GIVEN TO WAYS OF MAINTAINING OUR STANCE CREDIBLY. THE CHINESE AND THE FRENCH POSITIONS PLACED SEVERE PRACTICAL OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF A CTB.
5. ARMACOST SAID THAT, IN ADDITION TO ARMS CONTROL, THE US AND SOVIET UNION NEEDED TO WORK HARD ON REGIONAL ISSUES. A SCHEDULE OF REGIONAL TALKS IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1986, COVERING THE FIVE ISSUES PROPOSED BY THE AMERICANS LAST AUTUMN, HAD NOW BEEN AGREED WITH THE RUSSIANS. SHULTZ HAD HIMSELF HOPED TO GIVE THIS WORK A IMPETUS BY AN EARLY MEETING WITH SHEVARDNADZE. BUT NO DATES HAD YET BEEN AGREED (ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A NARROW WINDOW IN MARCH.)

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6. IN REPLY TO THE PUS'S QUESTION, ARMACOST SAID THAT, IF THE NEXT SUMMIT WERE NOT IN JUNE OR JULY, IT WOULD PROBABLY SLIP INTO 1987. THE AMERICANS HAD ALREADY MADE CLEAR THAT THE AUTUMN WAS INCONVENIENT FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS. US AND SOVIET HOLIDAYS IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER AND THE FACT THAT THE WINTER WAS NOT THE BEST TIME TO 'SHOW GORBACHEV AMERICA' WOULD BE MAJOR FACTORS. THE AMERICANS HAD THEREFORE EXPRESSED A STRONG PREFERENCE FOR JUNE, BUT THE RUSSIANS WERE WAITING FOR A US RESPONSE TO THE 15 JANUARY GORBACHEV ARMS CONTROLS PROPOSALS.

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