

ADVANCE COPIES

US/SOVIET ARMS CONTROL TALKS

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RESIDENT CLERK

15.1.85

IMMEDIATE

SECRET

FM WASHINGTON
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 428
OF 202300Z FEBRUARY 86
INFO PRIORITY MODUK (FOR DACU), BONN, PARIS, UKDEL NATO

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MY TELNO 396: ARMS CONTROL: US RESPONSE TO GORBACHEV'S PROPOSALS

1. MANY ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS THINK THAT PRESIDENTIAL DECISIONS ARE NOW IMMINENT (AND MIGHT INDEED BE TAKEN EN ROUTE BACK FROM GRENADA TONIGHT.) OFFICIALS EXPECT THAT ALLIED LEADERS WILL BE IMMEDIATELY NOTIFIED BY LETTER, AND THAT A MESSAGE TO GORBACHEV WILL FOLLOW VERY SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

2. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE DRAFT MESSAGE TO ALLIED LEADERS PREPARED FOR THE PRESIDENT CONTAIN MUCH OF THE SAME MATERIAL AS IN THE EARLIER MESSAGES OF 5 FEBRUARY. THE ONLY POINT IN DISPUTE IS HOW THE PRESIDENT SHOULD RESPOND TO GORBACHEV ON INF. WITH THE PAPERS NOW IN THE WHITE HOUSE OUR SOURCES ARE CLAMMING UP, BUT WE GATHER THAT PARAGRAPHS HAVE BEEN DRAFTED TO COVER 3 OPTIONS:

(A) A PROPOSAL FOR A GLOBAL LRINF REDUCTION OF 80 PERCENT ON BOTH SIDES (OPTION (C) IN MY TELNO 383). THIS MAY BE COUPLED WITH A REITERATION BY THE PRESIDENT THAT ZERO-ZERO REMAINS THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE:

(B) THE QUOTE SWING ZONE UNQUOTE PROPOSAL (OPTION (D) IN MY TELNO 383):

(C) A REITERATION OF THE INF ELEMENT IN THE US PROPOSALS OF 1 NOVEMBER I.E. 140 LAUNCHERS ON EACH SIDE IN OR WITHIN RANGE OF EUROPE, AND PROPORTIONATE REDUCTIONS IN ASIAN SS20S.

3. THE PROS AND CONS OF THE THREE OPTIONS ARE THOUGHT TO BE:

(A) WHILE OPTION (A) WOULD MEET THE JAPANESE WISH FOR EQUAL TREATMENT WITH THE EUROPEANS AND ALSO THE EUROPEAN PREFERENCE FOR SOME LRINF DEPLOYMENT IN EUROPE, THE PRESIDENT IS EXPECTED TO BE UNATTRACTED BY THE IDEA OF PROPOSING HIGHER INF NUMBERS IN EUROPE THAN GORBACHEV HAS PROPOSED:

(B) OPTION (B) WOULD ALSO SATISFY JAPANESE CONCERNS. BUT IT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS SINGLING OUT THE CHINESE ON THE ONE HAND AND THE NATO FLANK COUNTRIES ON THE OTHER. IN ADDITION, IT WOULD NOT SATISFY THE EUROPEAN POINT:

(C) OPTION (C) IS FAVOURED BY OSD BUT IS THOUGHT UNLIKELY TO

IT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS SINGLING OUT THE CHINESE ON
THE ONE HAND AND THE NATO FLANK COUNTRIES ON THE OTHER.
IN ADDITION, IT WOULD NOT SATISFY THE EUROPEAN POINT:
(C) OPTION (C) IS FAVOURED BY OSD BUT IS THOUGHT UNLIKELY TO
COMMEND ITSELF TO THE PRESIDENT GIVEN THAT IT CANNOT BE
PRESENTED AS A SPECIFIC RESPONSE TO GORBACHEV'S
15 JANUARY PROPOSALS.

4. NONE OF OUR CONTACTS FEEL CONFIDENT IN PREDICTING WHICH
VERSION THE PRESIDENT WILL PICK; AND HE MAY OF COURSE GO FOR
A QUITE DIFFERENT OPTION - OR CALL FOR FURTHER DELAY, AND AN
NSC DISCUSSION.

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