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FM WASHINGTON

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 1788

OF 032300Z JULY 1986

INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW, UKDEL NATO, BONN, PARIS, MODUK

MODUK FOR DACU.

MY TELNO 947: NUCLEAR TESTING, NEW US/SOVIET DIALOGUE?

1. THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE CONFIRMED (MOSCOW TELNO 778) THAT GORBACHEV'S LETTER DELIVERED TO THE PRESIDENT ON 23 JUNE ACCEPTED THE SUGGESTION PUT BY THE PRESIDENT TO DOBRYNIN DURING HIS FAREWELL CALL IN APRIL (MY TUR) THAT US/SOVIET DISCUSSIONS WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS BE HELD ON NUCLEAR TESTING ISSUES. GORBACHEV HAS PROPOSED AN EXPERT LEVEL MEETING IN EARLY JULY.
2. THERE HAS BEEN NO US REACTION SO FAR BUT STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS ASSUME THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL NOW SHORTLY PROPOSE A VENUE AND ALTERNATIVE DATES, PERHAPS IN AUGUST (JULY IS CONSIDERED TOO EARLY). THE ADMINISTRATION INTEND TO FIELD A TEAM OF TECHNICAL EXPERTS BUT THERE IS NO AGREEMENT YET ON ITS PRECISE COMPOSITION NOR ON WHETHER IT SHOULD BE LED BY A POLICY OFFICIAL OR A TECHNICAL EXPERT.
3. NEITHER SIDE HAS YET MADE PRECISE AGENDA PROPOSALS. THE ADMINISTRATION WILL NO DOUBT PROPOSE A DIALOGUE ON TBT, VERIFICATION ISSUES. BUT THEY FULLY EXPECT THAT THE RUSSIANS WILL WISH TO DISCUSS CTB-RELATED ISSUES AND OFFICIALS ANTICIPATE THAT THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL FOR A DISCUSSION QUOTE WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS UNQUOTE MEANS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION ARE BOUND TO ACCEPT THIS. IT THEREFORE NOW LOOKS AS IF CTB ISSUES WILL SHORTLY BE BACK ON THE US/SOVIET AGENDA ALTHOUGH THE TWO SIDES WILL OF COURSE BE APPROACHING THEM IN RADICALLY DIFFERENT WAYS.
5. THE PRESIDENT'S SUGGESTION AND GORBACHEV'S RESPONSE ARE STILL NOT PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE BUT STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS EXPECT THAT, ASSUMING NO LEAKS IN THE INTERIM, THERE WILL BE A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT WHEN DATES AND A VENUE FOR THE MEETING ARE AGREED.

WRHGH:

US/SOVIET ARMS CONTROL TALKS

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