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FM WASHINGTON

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 2107

OF 142225Z AUGUST 867

INFO ROUTINE MOSCOW, PARIS, BONN, UKDEL NATO

*Pme M...*MOSCOW TELNO 989: US/SOVIET ARMS CONTROL DISCUSSION  
SUMMARY

1. NITZE CONFIRMS MEETING NECESSARY AND WORTHWHILE. SOME FURTHER DETAIL ON THE DISCUSSIONS, WHICH APPARENTLY BROKE NO NEW GROUND. RUSSIANS KEEN TO HOLD SECOND ROUND SOON: NOW FIXED FOR 5-6 SEPTEMBER.

DETAIL

2. NITZE GAVE ME A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE DISCUSSIONS BEFORE RESUMING HIS HOLIDAY. WE HAVE ALSO FOLLOWED UP WITH OTHER STATE DEPT MEMBERS OF THE US TEAM.

3. NITZE TOLD ME THAT THE TALKS MADE NO HEADWAY ON SUBSTANCE, BUT HE FELT THAT THEY HAD NONETHELESS BEEN NECESSARY AND WORTHWHILE. HE ADDED THAT IN HIS EXPERIENCE, THE RUSSIANS WERE CONSTANTLY TRYING NEW NEGOTIATING GAMBITS, AND THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO KEEP BRINGING THEM BACK TO THE CENTRAL POINTS AT ISSUE. A GOOD DEAL OF SUCH FENCING HAD GONE ON IN THESE TALKS. BUT THE RUSSIANS HAD BEEN UNWILLING TO TAKE THE DISCUSSION OF SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES BEYOND THE POINT REACHED IN THE GENEVA TALKS. EACH TIME THE DISCUSSION REACHED THAT POINT, THE RUSSIANS SIMPLY RESPONDED THAT THE QUESTION NEEDED FURTHER REFLECTION.

4. I ASKED NITZE WHETHER HE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE TAKING THE PRESIDENT'S LATEST PROPOSALS SERIOUSLY. HE SAID THAT HE HAD SO FAR FOUND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO FORM A JUDGEMENT ON THIS. OTHER STATE CONTACTS HAVE TOLD US THAT THE SOVIET DELEGATION APPEARED TO HAVE NO NEW INSTRUCTIONS ON ANY ISSUE. THE MAIN POINTS OF SUBSTANCE APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN AS FOLLOWS.

5. SPACE. KARPOV SUGGESTED THAT SOME COMMON GROUND EXISTED IN THAT NEITHER SIDE INTENDED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE ABM TREATY FOR SOME YEARS. THERE HAD BEEN SOME DISCUSSION OF WHAT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES WERE PERMITTED UNDER THE TREATY. KARPOV ALSO PROBED ON THE OFFENSIVE/DEFENSIVE RELATIONSHIP AND WAS GIVEN A STANDARD EXPOSITION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF SD BY PERLE. CHERVOV CHOKED OFF THE DISCUSSION BEFORE IT COULD DEVELOP.

6. START. THE US TEAM TRIED TO FOCUS THE DISCUSSION ON THE NEED FOR REDUCTIONS IN THE MORE DESTABILISING TYPES OF WEAPONS, AND HOW THAT COULD BE ACHIEVED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SMALLER PERCENTAGE REDUCTIONS NOW ENVISAGED. KARPOV WAS UNWILLING TO DISCUSS THIS.

7. INF. AN EXCHANGE OF FAMILIAR POSITIONS, FROM WHICH NOTHING NEW EMERGED.

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8. IN AN EFFORT TO CONCENTRATE ATTENTION ON THE MAIN POINTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO GORBACHEV, THE US TEAM HAD LEFT THE RUSSIANS ON THE SECOND DAY WITH A SERIES OF QUESTIONS. ONE SOUGHT A SOVIET REACTION TO THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS ON EXTENDING THE ABM TREATY. A SECOND ASKED FOR SOVIET VIEWS ON HOW TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE DIFFERENCES IN COMPOSITION OF STRATEGIC FORCES IN THE CONTEXT OF SIGNIFICANT REDUCTIONS. A THIRD ASKED WHETHER THE RUSSIANS WERE PREPARED TO ACCEPT AN INTERIM INF AGREEMENT ON THE BASIS OF EQUAL CEILINGS IN EUROPE AND PROPORTIONAL SOVIET REDUCTIONS IN ASIA.
9. APART FROM GENEVA ISSUES, THERE HAD BEEN SOME DISCUSSION OF MBFR. NITZE TOLD ME THAT THERE HAD BEEN A HARD-HITTING EXCHANGE AFTER THE RUSSIANS HAD ACCUSED THE WEST OF STONE-WALLING. NITZE HAD PUT THEM RIGHT ON THIS.
10. NITZE CONFIRMED THAT THE SOVIET SIDE HAD BEEN KEEN TO HOLD A RETURN MATCH: INDEED THEY WANTED ONE RATHER SOONER THAN WAS CONVENIENT FOR THE AMERICANS. STATE HAVE SINCE TOLD US THAT A FURTHER MEETING HAS BEEN FIXED FOR 5-6 SEPTEMBER IN WASHINGTON. THEY HOPE THAT THE AMERICAN QUESTIONS WILL FORM THE POINT OF DEPARTURE AT THAT SESSION.
11. THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE BEEN DELIBERATELY LOW-KEY IN THEIR PUBLIC COMMENTS. STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN COMMENTED ON 13 AUGUST AS FOLLOWS: THE TWO DAYS OF MEETINGS WERE SERIOUS, SUBSTANTIVE AND BUSINESSLIKE. EACH SIDE WAS ABLE TO HEAR THE OTHER OUT IN DETAIL AND TO EXPRESS ITS OWN VIEWS. IDEAS WERE EXPLORED, AND THERE WAS A GOOD EXCHANGE.

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