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MODUK (FOR DACU PS/SOFS, DUS(P), DACU)

US COMPLIANCE WITH SALT AGREEMENTS

SUMMARY

1. THE US WILL STILL NOT HAVE BROKEN THE SALT II LIMITS AT THE TIME OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT. BUT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL HAVE DECISIONS TO TAKE IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER.

DETAIL

2. THE LATEST POSITION ON THE SALT LIMITS IS AS FOLLOWS:

- (A) DEPLOYMENT OF THE 131ST ALCM-CARRYING B52 BOMBER, IF UNACCOMPANIED BY ANY MATCHING DISMANTLEMENT OF POSEIDON SLBMS OR MINUTEMAN III ICBMS, WOULD TAKE THE US OVER THE SALT II SUB-LIMIT OF 1320 ON MIRVED MISSILES AND ALCM-CARRYING BOMBERS. TECHNICALLY, THIS COULD HAPPEN AS EARLY AS NEXT WEEK, WHEN THE CONVERSION OF THE 131ST BOMBER WILL BE COMPLETED. BUT IT WILL IN FACT BE HELD BACK INSIDE A HANGAR UNTIL HIGH-LEVEL DECISIONS ARE TAKEN. (ON CURRENT B52 CONVERSION SCHEDULES, PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE TO HOLD IT, AND SUBSEQUENT ALCM-CONVERTED BOMBERS, IN THIS WAY FOR SEVERAL WEEKS.)
- (B) TWO POSEIDON SUBMARINES WILL BE TAKEN OUT OF THE WATER THIS MONTH, ONE (THE KAMEHAMEHA) ON 10 NOVEMBER AND THE OTHER (THE ALEXANDER HAMILTON) ON 30 NOVEMBER. CONTRACTS HAVE BEEN PLACED FOR BOTH TO BE OVERHAULED (IE NOT DISMANTLED). HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT POLITICAL DECISIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN FAVOUR OF OVERHAUL RATHER THAN DISMANTLEMENT: THEY HAVE NOT, AND THE QUESTION IS STILL OPEN. WE ALSO KNOW THAT THE US NAVY WISH TO DISMANTLE THE ALEXANDER HAMILTON FOR ECONOMIC/OPERATIONAL REASONS (THOUGH THEY WISH TO OVERHAUL AND RECORE THE KAMEHAMEHA). IF THE NAVY'S PREFERENCES ARE ADHERED TO, THEREFORE, DISMANTLEMENT OF THE ALEXANDER HAMILTON COULD BEGIN IN EARLY DECEMBER. AT THE PRESENT RATE OF B52 CONVERSIONS, THIS WOULD ENSURE CONTINUED US COMPLIANCE WITH THE SALT LIMITS UNTIL JULY 1987. (OSD WILL HOWEVER PRESSURE THE NAVY TO ALTER ITS PREFERENCE.)
- (C) THE DECISION TO HOLD BACK THE 131ST ALCM-CARRYING B52 IS A POLITICAL DECISION. IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN PARTLY TO GIVE THE ADMINISTRATION A CHANCE TO ASSESS THE OVERALL PROSPECTS FOR ARMS CONTROL AND US/SOVIET RELATIONS FOLLOWING REYKJAVIK AND SHULTZ'S MEETING WITH SHEVARDNADZE

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IN VIENNA: PARTLY BECAUSE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S IMMINENT VISIT: AND PARTLY OUT OF A DESIRE TO AVOID PRECIPITATE ACTION LIKELY TO ANGER THE NEW DEMOCRAT-CONTROLLED SENATE.
(D) THE AGENCIES CONCERNED HAVE PROVIDED THE WHITE HOUSE WITH OPTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY ANNOUNCED BY THE PRESIDENT ON 27 MAY. SOME OF THESE OPTIONS (ESPECIALLY THOSE SUBMITTED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT) WOULD ALLOW THE US TO REMAIN IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE SALT LIMITS FOR AT LEAST 6-8 MORE MONTHS. BUT NO AGENCY, INCLUDING THE STATE DEPARTMENT, IS CONTESTING THE 27 MAY POLICY AS SUCH.

GORBACHEV'S FAILURE TO RAISE THE SUBJECT IN REYKJAVIK (AND THE SOVIET FAILURE TO RAISE IT AT THE SECOND ROUND OF RITZE/KARPOV DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON IN SEPTEMBER) IS BEING INTERPRETED AS EVIDENCE THAT THE RUSSIANS DO NOT ATTACH MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO THE MATTER AND HAVE ALREADY DISCOUNTED ITS POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES, SINCE THEY NO DOUBT KNOW THAT THERE CAN BE NO SUDDEN PROLIFERATION OF NEW US NUCLEAR SYSTEMS. (EQUALLY, OF COURSE, THEY MIGHT WELCOME THE PROPAGANDA GIFT OF THE US BREAKING THE LIMITS.)

3. WE DO NOT KNOW THE DETAIL OF THE OPTIONS PUT TO THE WHITE HOUSE. BUT THE OUTLINES ARE CLEAR. TO AVOID AN EARLY BREACH OF THE SALT LIMITS WOULD ENTAIL ACCEDED TO THE USN WISH TO DISMANTLE RATHER THAN OVERHAUL THE ALEXANDER HAMILTON: AND HOLDING BACK THE 131ST ALCM-CONVERTED B52 UNTIL DISMANTLEMENT HAD BEGUN. THIS PROCEDURE COULD BE PRESENTED AS DRIVEN BY TECHNICAL/OPERATIONAL/ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS, AND THEREFORE AS FULLY IN LINE WITH THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF 27 MAY, WHEN THE DENUNCIATION OF SALT II WAS COUPLED WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SCRAPPING OF 2 POSEIDON SUBMARINES ON GROUNDS OF QUOTE CURRENT MILITARY AND ECONOMIC REALITIES UNQUOTE. AT THE OTHER END OF THE SPECTRUM, RELEASING THE 131ST BOMBER, AND DISMANTLING NEITHER OF THE 2 FURTHER SUBMARINES NOW AT ISSUE WOULD PRODUCE A CLEAR AND SUSTAINED BREACH OF THE LIMITS. A MIDDLE OPTION WOULD BE TO DECIDE TO DISMANTLE THE ALEXANDER HAMILTON, BUT RELEASE THE 131ST B52 FIRST, THUS PRODUCING A BRIEF TECHNICAL VIOLATION OF THE SALT LIMITS FOLLOWED BY A LONGER PERIOD OF CONTINUED COMPLIANCE.

4. THE PRIME MINISTER'S CHANCE TO GIVE THE PRESIDENT HER PERSONAL VIEWS AT CAMP DAVID ON 15 NOVEMBER IS CLEARLY VERY TIMELY.

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