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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 24 OF 4 JANUARY

INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW, UKDEL NATO, BONN, PARIS, MODUK, ROUTINE  
OTHER NATO POSTS, UKDEL VIENNA, UKDIS GENEVA, TOKYO, EAST  
EUROPEAN POSTS.

**ARMS CONTROL: SHULTZ/GROMYKO MEETING, GENEVA, 7-8 JANUARY**

## SUMMARY.

1. MODEST US AMBITIONS FOR THE SHULTZ/GROMYKO MEETING IN GENEVA ON 7-8 JANUARY AND CONTINUING OFFICIAL CONCERN ABOUT EXAGGERATED EXPECTATIONS. SOME PRESIDENTIAL DECISIONS ON THE US APPROACH NOW TAKEN BUT MOST MAJOR SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES LEFT OPEN AMID CONTINUING INTER-AGENCY DISAGREEMENT. POSSIBLE THAT US/SOVIET AGREEMENT MAY BE REACHED ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEGOTIATING FORA AND ON SUBJECTS FOR NEGOTIATION IN EACH ONE. BUT MORE LIMITED AGREEMENT TO A FURTHER SHULTZ/GROMYKO MEETING TO CONTINUE PROCEDURAL DISCUSSION GENERALLY CONSIDERED A MORE LIKELY OUTCOME. AND SOME OFFICIALS BELIEVE A SOVIET-ENGINEERED FIASCO CANNOT BE EXCLUDED. CONTINUING SOVIET WEDGE-DRIVING ACTIVITIES CONSIDERED CERTAIN.

2. PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGES TO ALLIED LEADERS IN PREPARATION FOR POSSIBLE DELIVERY OVER THE WEEKEND. BRIEFING OF THE NAC LIKELY IMMEDIATELY AFTER GENEVA MEETING. FURTHER EXTENSIVE PPESS BRIEFING GIVEN BY MCFARLANE.

## DETAIL

3. THE ADMINISTRATION'S MAXIMUM OBJECTIVE FOR THE SHULTZ/GROMYKO MEETING REMAINS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF US/SOVIET AGREEMENT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATING FORA AND ON BROAD DEFINITIONS OF THE SUBJECTS TO BE COVERED IN EACH ONE. BUT MOST OFFICIALS CONCEDE THAT THIS CAN PROBABLY NOT BE ACHIEVED IN TWO DAYS GIVEN THE LIKELIHOOD OF ATTEMPTS BY GROMYKO TO SECURE AGREEMENT IN ADVANCE OF ANY NEGOTIATIONS ON WHAT THE "OBJECTIVES" SHOULD BE: PROBABLE SOVIET DEMANDS FOR AN ASAT TESTING MORATORIUM AND FREEZE ON INF DEPLOYMENTS; AND EXPECTED FIERCE RESISTANCE BY GROMYKO TO US IDEAS ON DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS. A MORE MODEST OUTCOME IS THEREFORE MORE LIKELY, POSSIBLY INVOLVING AGREEMENT ON A SECOND SHULTZ/GROMYKO MEETING TO CONTINUE THE SEARCH FOR AGREEMENT ON PROCEDURAL MATTERS AND WHAT IS EXPECTED TO BE A RATHER PHILOSOPHICAL DIALOGUE. SOME PESSIMISTS DO NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT GROMYKO MAY BE PREPARED TO ENGINEER A FIASCO (SIMILAR TO VANCE'S RECEPTION IN MOSCOW IN 1977) IN REACTION TO US IDEAS ON DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS. THEY NOTE, IN SUPPORT OF THEIR VIEW, THAT THE RUSSIANS HAVE PREPARED THE GROUND CAREFULLY FOR ASSIGNING BLAME TO THE US IN CASE OF FAILURE AND

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THAT THE RUSSIANS MAY VIEW THIS AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF BUILDING PUBLIC AND ALLIED PRESSURE ON THE ADMINISTRATION OVER THE SDI. BUT THE MAJORITY VIEW IS THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE UNLIKELY TO HAVE AGREED TO RESUME THE US/SOVIET ARMS CONTROL DIALOGUE IN ORDER TO SABOTAGE IT EVEN BEFORE IT HAS BEGUN. PROTRACTED WRANGLING OVER PROCEDURE COULD NEVERTHELESS BE USED BY THE RUSSIANS AS A WEDGE-DRIVING TECHNIQUE AND TO BUILD PUBLIC PRESSURE ON THE PRESIDENT.

4. THESE MODEST AMBITIONS FOR THE MEETING CONTINUE TO BE REFLECTED IN OFFICIAL CONCERN ABOUT EXAGGERATED PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS AND THE VERY HIGH LEVEL OF MEDIA INTEREST. MCFARLANE WARNED AGAINST THIS AGAIN YESTERDAY AND THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF SAID IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE JAPANESE NEWSPAPER YOMIURI SHIMBUN ON 29 DECEMBER QUOTE WE MUST TEMPER OUR EXPECTATIONS WITH REALISM .... A TWO-DAY MEETING CANNOT SOLVE THE COMPLICATED ISSUES BEFORE US. WE HOPE IT WILL BE A CONSTRUCTIVE BEGINNING FOR FURTHER DETAILED NEGOTIATIONS. BUT IT ISN'T AN EASY JOB UNQUOTE.

5. FOLLOWING MEETINGS IN CALIFORNIA ON 1 JANUARY WITH SHULTZ, WEINBERGER AND MCFARLANE, THE PRESIDENT HAS NOW TAKEN SOME DECISIONS ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION'S APPROACH TO THE GENEVA MEETING. DETAILS ARE NOT KNOWN BUT THE FOLLOWING GENERAL POINTS SEEM CLEAR:

A) MOST SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES ON POSSIBLE US NEGOTIATING POSITIONS HAVE BEEN LEFT UNDECIDED ON THE GROUNDS THAT SUCH DECISIONS IN ADVANCE OF ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS ARE NOT NECESSARY. INTER-AGENCY DISAGREEMENT ALSO CONTINUES TO BE A PROBLEM. THIS APPEARS TO APPLY IN PARTICULAR TO POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE US POSITION ON STRATEGIC NUCLEAR SYSTEMS AS WELL AS TO POSSIBLE IDEAS FOR ASAT TESTING CONSTRAINTS. BUT SHULTZ WILL BE ABLE TO SPEAK (AS HE AND THE PRESIDENT DID TO GROMYKO IN SEPTEMBER) OF US FLEXIBILITY ON START, INF AND ASATS IF NEGOTIATIONS GET PROPERLY UNDERWAY:

B) THE ADMINISTRATION'S FIRST PREFERENCE CONTINUES TO BE TO KEEP NEGOTIATIONS ON STRATEGIC SYSTEMS AND INF SEPARATE AND THEREFORE TO ESTABLISH THREE NEGOTIATING FORA COVERING, RESPECTIVELY, STRATEGIC SYSTEMS, INF, AND SPACE/DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS. BUT SHULTZ WILL HAVE VERY CONSIDERABLE FLEXIBILITY TO REACT POSITIVELY TO ANY SOVIET IDEAS FOR A MERGED NEGOTIATION ON OFFENSIVE SYSTEMS, AT LEAST OF A PROCEDURAL SORT (US AGREEMENT TO TRY TO NEGOTIATE COMMON CEILINGS IS THOUGHT BY STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS TO REQUIRE PRIOR CONSULTATION IN THE ALLIANCE):

C) SHULTZ'S PURPOSE ON DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS WILL BE TO ENGAGE GROMYKO IN A DIALOGUE IN WHICH THE SDI WOULD BE EXPLAINED; THE MERITS OF BMD AND THE NATURE OF THE OFFENSIVE/DEFENSIVE RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE EXPLORED; AND US CONCERNS ABOUT SOVIET ABM-RELATED ACTIVITY, PARTICULARLY THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ABALAKOVO RADAR, WOULD BE EXPRESSED. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT US DOUBTS ABOUT SOVIET COMPLIANCE WITH THE ABM TREATY WILL FEATURE IN A SIGNIFICANT MANNER IN SHULTZ'S BRIEF. MCFARLANE MADE CLEAR IN HIS PRESS BRIEFING YESTERDAY THAT THE ADMINISTRATION REMAINED FIRMLY OPPOSED TO ACCEPTING ANY CONSTRAINT ON THE SDI RESEARCH PROGRAMME.

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(MCFARLANE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ANY EVENTUAL BMD DEPLOYMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE NEGOTIATED BUT SAID IT WAS TOO EARLY TO CONSIDER THIS POSSIBILITY.) THE PRESIDENT MEANWHILE RECONFIRMED HIS COMMITMENT TO THE SDI YESTERDAY IN THE FORWARD TO A WHITE HOUSE BOOKLET EXPLAINING THE INITIATIVE.

6. ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SAY THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO SUBSTANTIVE US/SOVIET CONTACTS IN THE RUN-UP TO THE GENEVA MEETING. THE ADMINISTRATION THEREFORE HAVE NO CLEAR IDEA IN DETAIL OF THE SOVIET APPROACH. BUT THE GENERAL EXPECTATION IS THAT DECLARED SOVIET INTEREST IN EARLY AGREEMENT ON QUOTE OBJECTIVES UNQUOTE AND QUOTE RADICAL SOLUTIONS UNQUOTE WILL FIND EXPRESSION IN RE-NEWED SWEEPING PROPOSALS FOR THE QUOTE DEMILITARISATION OF OUTER SPACE UNQUOTE. OTHER LIKELY ASPECTS OF GROMYKO'S OPENING POSITION ARE THOUGHT TO BE AN INF FREEZE (UNACCEPTABLE TO THE ADMINISTRATION) AND AN ASAT TESTING MORATORIUM (UNACCEPTABLE TO THE ADMINISTRATION, AT LEAST AT THIS STAGE). AN ACCOMPANYING SOVIET PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE DESIGNED TO SPLIT THE ALLIANCE IS EXPECTED AND IT IS NOTED THAT THIS AND SOVIET DISINFORMATION EFFORTS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN.

7. WE UNDERSTAND THAT MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT TO ALLIED LEADERS DESCRIBING THE ADMINISTRATION'S APPROACH TO THE MEETING HAVE BEEN PREPARED AND MAY ISSUE DURING THE WEEKEND. IT IS ALSO ENVISAGED THAT THE ALLIANCE WILL BE BRIEFED ON THE MEETING SHORTLY AFTERWARDS, PERHAPS BY NITZE AND BURT IN BRUSSELS ON THEIR WAY BACK TO WASHINGTON.

8. WE ARE REPORTING SEPARATELY ON MCFARLANE'S FURTHER EXTENSIVE BRIEFING OF THE PRESS YESTERDAY.

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