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FM MOSCOW

TO DESKBY 180900Z F C O

TELNO 395

OF 180815Z MARCH 87

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

INFO PRIORITY ISLAMABAD, UKMIS NEW YORK

YOUR TELNO 299: ARMACOST'S TALKS IN MOSCOW

SUMMARY

TALKS CONFINED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO REGIONAL ISSUES, WITH THE EMPHASIS ON AFGHANISTAN. NO NOVELTIES IN SOVIET POSITIONS: BUT ARMACOST BELIEVES THAT HE DID NET ACROSS THE MESSAGE THAT US/SOVIET RELATIONS CANNOT BE BASED ON ARMS CONTROL ALONE.

DETAIL

2. THE US CHARGE, COMBS, GAVE ME THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF ARMACOST'S TALKS HERE ON 16/17 MARCH. ARMACOST MAY BE ABLE TO AMPLIFY IT WITH REGARD TO DISCUSSIONS E.G. WITH DOBRYNIN LATE ON 17 MARCH, AT WHICH COMBS WAS NOT PRESENT.

AFGHANISTAN

3. AFGHANISTAN WAS DISCUSSED AT SOME LENGTH BOTH WITH SHEVARDNADZE AND, SEPARATELY, WITH FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER VORONTSOV. THEY BOTH TOOK THE SAME UNYIELDING LINE, ALTHOUGH SHEVARDNADZE DID SO WITH GREATER AMIABILITY. SHEVARDNADZE ASKED WHO, IF NOT NAJIB, COULD LEAD THE AFGHAN PEOPLE TO RECONCILIATION ? AND WHO WAS TO TELL HIM THAT HE HAD TO GIVE UP POWER ? NAJIB WAS HEADING A LEGITIMATE SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENT. THE PROCESS OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WHICH HE WAS LEADING WAS A REALITY. THE PAKISTANIS SHOULD ACCEPT IT AS A FACT AND AGREE TO COMPROMISE. VORONTSOV REAFFIRMED TO ARMACOST THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS READY TO WITHDRAW: A WITHDRAWAL PERIOD OF 18 MONTHS WAS REASONABLE. THE UNITED STATES WAS TRYING TO DISRUPT THE PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION BY STIFFENING THE ATTITUDES OF THE MUJAHEDDIN DESPITE THIS, NAJIB WAS MAKING GOOD PROGRESS WITH RECONCILIATION.

4. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT PUT DIRECTLY THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT COULD LIVE WITH A KABUL REGIME WHICH WAS NOT HEADED BY THE PDPA, ARMACOST TOLD SHEVARDNADZE THAT THE US ADMINISTRATION SAW NO WAY FORWARD SO LONG AS NAJIB REMAINED IN POWER SINCE HIS ASSOCIATION WITH THE SOVIET UNION WAS INDISSOLUBLE. HE SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD NO INTEREST IN HUMILIATING THE SOVIET UNION IN AFGHANISTAN: BUT THE SITUATION THERE WAS NEVERTHELESS PIVOTAL NOT ONLY IN US/SOVIET BUT ALSO IN EAST/WEST RELATIONS. COMMENTING SUBSEQUENTLY, ARMACOST SAID THAT THE SOVIET

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POSITION

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POSITION APPEARED TO BE COMPLETELY UNCHANGED AND THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE NOT SERIOUS ABOUT PUTTING THEIR PROFESSED INTENTIONS INTO PRACTICE.

CAMBODIA

5. EXCHANGES WITH SHEVARDNADZE AND DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ROGACHEV REVEALED NOTHING NEW. SHEVARDNADZE TOOK THE LINE THAT, AS HE HAD JUST SEEN FOR HIMSELF, ALL WAS WELL IN CAMBODIA. THERE, AS ELSEWHERE - E.G. IN NICARAGUA AND ANGOLA - OBJECTIVE PROCESSES WERE IN TRAIN WITH WHICH THE US SHOULD COME TO TERMS.

MIDDLE EAST

6. AGAIN, THERE WERE NO NOVELTIES. VORONTSOV SAID THAT A PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, LEADING TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, NEED NOT PRECLUDE THE CONTINUATION OF BILATERAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE PARTIES CONCERNED.

IRAN/IRAQ

7. VORONTSOV SIMPLY SAID THAT THE WAR SHOULD END BUT THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT HAD NO FAITH IN SANCTIONS SINCE THERE WAS NO WAY IN WHICH THEY COULD BE ENFORCED.

PAKISTAN

8. ON THE QUESTION OF PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR CAPABILITY, WHICH ARMACOST RAISED WITH VORONTSOV OVER LUNCH ON 17 MARCH, VORONTSOV AGREED THAT 'SOMETHING' HAD TO BE DONE. ARMACOST SAID THAT IT WAS UP TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO SPEAK CANDIDLY TO THE INDIANS, TO WHICH VORONTSOV RETORTED THAT IT WAS UP TO THE AMERICANS TO TALK TO THE PAKISTANIS. ARMACOST EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE INDIANS AND THE PAKISTANIS WOULD TALK TO EACH OTHER - ALL IN ALL A VERY UNPRODUCTIVE EXCHANGE.

NORTH KOREA

9. THE AMERICANS HAD APPARENTLY CONVEYED A MESSAGE TO THE NORTH KOREANS, VIA THE CHINESE, THAT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO ENTER INTO DISCUSSIONS WITH NORTH KOREAN REPRESENTATIVES. THE RUSSIANS USED THE OCCASION OF ARMACOST'S VISIT TO CONVEY THE NORTH KOREAN REPLY, WHICH WAS IN PRINCIPLE RECEPTIVE TO THE SUGGESTION OF DISCUSSIONS BUT WHOLLY NEGATIVE ON ANY LINKAGE BETWEEN THEM AND, E.G., THE OLYMPICS ISSUE.

ARMS CONTROL

10. ARMACOST HAD BROUGHT NOTHING IN HIS BRIEFCASE ABOUT ARMS CONTROL BUT SHEVARDNADZE RAISED IT NEVERTHELESS. HE SAID THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WAS WORKING ON 'A MORE GENERAL APPROACH' TO THE NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA ON BOTH SPACE AND STRATEGIC REDUCTIONS:

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ALTHOUGH

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ALTHOUGH AGREEMENT ON INF SEEMED TO BE A CLOSER PROSPECT THAN IN THE OTHER TWO AREAS (SHEVARDNADZE MENTIONED THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE WORKING ON AN INF VERIFICATION PACKAGE) PROGRESS ON SPACE AND STRATEGIC REDUCTIONS COULD ALSO BE ENVISAGED. SHEVARDNADZE STRESSED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SOVIET DESIRE FOR SUCH PROGRESS.

US/SOVIET RELATIONS

11. BOTH SHEVARDNADZE AND DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER BESSMERTNYKH SAID THAT THEY WERE TAKING SHULTZ'S FORTHCOMING VISIT IN APRIL EXTREMELY SERIOUSLY: IT WOULD DETERMINE THE COURSE OF US/SOVIET RELATIONS FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS. IT MIGHT BE FOLLOWED BY A FURTHER SUCH MEETING.

HUMAN RIGHTS

12. ARMACOST RAISED THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HANDED OVER THE CURRENT US LIST OF OUTSTANDING FAMILY REUNIFICATION CASES, WHICH NOW NUMBER ONLY 10.

13. ALTHOUGH NOT PRODUCTIVE OF NEW INSIGHTS (UNLESS DOBRYNIN GAVE SOME) ARMACOST CONSIDERS THE VISIT WORTHWHILE IN BRINGING HOME TO THE RUSSIANS THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THE US ADMINISTRATION ATTACHES TO THE NON-ARMS CONTROL DIMENSIONS OF US/SOVIET RELATIONS.

CARTLEDGE

MXMPAN 8563

EAST WEST & US/SOVIET RELATIONS
LIMITED

(COPIES TO NO 10 DOWNING ST.)

SOVIET D.
DEFENCE D.
RESEARCH DEPT.
PLANNING STAFF
EED
NAD
SAD
WED
ACDD
CRD
NEWS DEPT.
INFO DEPT.
ECD(E)
POD
FED
NED
POSD
CSCE UNIT
PROTOCOL DEPT.
ESSD

PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR RENTON
PS/MR EGGAR
PS/PUS
MR DEREK THOMAS
CHIEF CLERK
MR BOYD
MR MUNRO
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ARMS CONTROL TALKS

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