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TO PRIORITY FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 895 OF 12 MARCH  
INFO PRIORITY UKDEL NATO, MODUK (FOR DUSP AND DACU)

M IPT AND MY TELS NOS 855 AND 856: US/SOVIET ARMS CONTROL  
NEGOTIATIONS: US APPROACH

1. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION DOCUMENT, ON WHICH MCFARLANE'S COMMENTS WERE BASED, CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

DEFENCE/SPACE

2. MCFARLANE'S DESCRIPTION OF THE DELEGATION'S INSTRUCTIONS ON DEFENCE/SPACE (PARA 4 OF M IPT) APPARENTLY MIRRORS VERY CLOSELY THE CONTENT OF THE DECISION DOCUMENT. IT CONTAINED NOTHING NEW ON THIS ASPECT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.

START

3. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE PRESIDENT NEITHER ACCEPTED NOR REJECTED ANY OF THE SIX SPECIFIC OPTIONS PUT TO HIM: THIS EXPLAINS MCFARLANE'S REFERENCE TO THE FLEXIBILITY AND LATITUDE GIVEN TO THE NEGOTIATING TEAM. THE NSDD DOES APPARENTLY CONTAIN TWO GENERAL DECISIONS:

- (A) THAT AGGREGATION OF ALCMS AND RVS, AND MISSILES AND BOMBERS, WAS ACCEPTABLE AND
- (B) THAT PARALLEL REDUCTIONS IN SNDVS AND WARHEADS (THE "STATE FRAMEWORK" APPROACH) WAS ACCEPTABLE.

HOWEVER, THE DELEGATION IS NOT REPEAT NOT AUTHORIZED AT THIS STAGE TO TABLE SPECIFIC NEW PROPOSALS, BUT ONLY TO EXPLORE SOLUTIONS INVOLVING ONE OR BOTH OF THESE TWO ELEMENTS IN RESPONSE TO SOVIET IDEAS.

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4. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE PRESIDENT REJECTED THE IDEA OF A 50 PER CENT CUT IN SOVIET AND US LAUNCHERS. HIS DECISION APPEARS TO HAVE INVOLVED THE REJECTION OF ALL APPROACHES INVOLVING EQUAL PERCENTAGE REDUCTIONS ON THE GROUNDS THAT SOME PERCENTAGE NUMBERS WHICH THE RUSSIANS MIGHT COUNTER-PROPOSE WOULD INVOLVE OUTCOMES UNACCEPTABLE TO THE US AND TO NATO.

THE NSDD INSTEAD INSTRUCTS THE US DELEGATION TO EXPLAIN AND FLESH OUT POSSIBLE WAYS OF IMPLEMENTING THE US AUTUMN 1983 PROPOSALS (BURT MAY HAVE GIVEN MORE DETAILS AT THE SCG ON 11 MARCH.)

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5. OPINIONS AT WORKING LEVEL WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION ARE DIVIDED ABOUT WHAT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISIONS MEAN, PARTICULARLY ON START. IN SPITE OF THE APPARENT FLEXIBILITY GIVEN TO THE NEGOTIATORS, SOME OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE NEEDED BEFORE SPECIFIC US PROPOSALS CAN BE TABLED IN EITHER START OR INF, AND THAT ANY REQUEST FOR SUCH INSTRUCTIONS WILL MERELY STIMULATE ANOTHER ROUND OF INTER-AGENCY INFIGHTING HERE. THOSE WHO INTERPRET THE PRESIDENT'S DECISIONS IN THIS WAY SEE THEM AS THE UNSATISFACTORY COMPROMISE POSITIONS WHICH THEY HAD FEARED (PARA 5 OF MY TEL NO 854). OTHERS TAKE A MORE OPTIMISTIC VIEW, BELIEVING THAT THE PRESIDENT'S REFUSAL TO DECIDE BETWEEN SPECIFIC OPTIONS (EXCEPT ON INF) REPRESENTS A REAL DESIRE ON HIS PART TO GIVE HIS NEGOTIATORS MAXIMUM FREEDOM OF MANOEUVRE, AND THAT THE SENIORITY OF THE NEGOTIATORS WILL ENABLE EFFECTIVE USE TO BE MADE OF THIS FREEDOM. THEY ALSO POINT TO THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION ON AGGREGATION AND PARALLEL SNDV AND WARHEAD REDUCTIONS IN START.

6. IT IS TOO EARLY TO FORM A DEFINITIVE JUDGEMENT. BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S PREFERENCE ON OVERALL NEGOTIATING STRATEGY FOR MAKING EARLY US MOVES IN ONE OR BOTH OF THE OFFENSIVE NEGOTIATING GROUPS, TO OFFSET THE US POSITION IN THE DEFENCE/SPACE GROUP HAS NOT BEEN ACCEPTED AT THIS STAGE. STATE MAY HAVE BEEN OVER-AMBITIOUS: AND THE PRESIDENT'S AUTUMN RELUCTANCE TO OFFER THE RUSSIANS ANYTHING TO BRING THEM BACK TO THE TABLE MAY NOW BE MATCHED BY A RELUCTANCE TO "REWARD" THEM AT ONCE FOR RETURNING. UNLESS THE RUSSIANS SPRING A SURPRISE, IT LOOKS LIKE HARD SLOGGING FROM THE START.

WRIGHT

US/SOVIET ARMS CONTROL TALKS

LIMITED

DEFENCE D  
ACDD  
SOVIET D  
NEWS D  
NAD  
EED  
WED  
PLANNING STAFF  
RESEARCH D  
INFO D  
PUSD

PS  
PS/LADY YOUNG  
PS/MR RIFKIND  
PS/MR LUCE  
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ARMS CONTROL TALKS

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