

US/SOVIET ARMS CONTROL TALKS

PS  
 PS/LADY YOUNG  
 PS/MR LUCE  
 PS/PUS  
 MR DEREK THOMAS  
 MR GOODALL  
 MR JENKINS  
 MR WESTON  
 MR DAVID THOMAS

MR POWELL, NO 10 DOWNING ST

MR D NICHOLLS, DUS(P) } MOD  
 3. NPS( ) }  
 DACU }

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RESIDENT CLERK

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CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 170255Z MAY 85  
 TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
 TELEGRAM NUMBER 1588 OF 16 MAY  
 AND TO MOD (FOR DUS (P) AND DACU)  
 INFO UKDEL NATO

OUR TELS NOS 1517 AND 1548: SALT ROMAN TWO INTERIM RESTRAINTS

## SUMMARY

1. THE US DECISION-POINT, ON WHETHER TO CONTINUE TO RESPECT THE SAL LIMITS, WHEN THE NEXT TRIDENT SUBMARINE STARTS SEA-TRIALS, HAS BEEN ADVANCED, AND MAY NOW BE IMMINENT. CASE FOR A MESSAGE WARNING OF LIKELY ADVERSE EUROPEAN REACTIONS, IF THE DECISION WERE TO IGNORE THE LIMIT.

## DETAIL

2. PERLE'S 7 MAY TESTIMONY (MY TELNO 1517) HAS TOUCHED OFF A SHARP PUBLIC DEBATE HERE. STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCES CONFIRM PRESS REPORTS THAT THE FOCAL QUESTION IS WHAT THE US SHOULD DO WHEN THE NEXT TRIDENT SUBMARINE (THE ALASKA) STARTS SEA TRIALS IN SEPTEMBER. FOUR OPTIONS ARE UNDER DISCUSSION, VIZ:

(I) TO DECOMMISSION, AND DISMANTLE THE MISSILE TUBES ON, ONE POSEIDON SUBMARINE IN COMPENSATION:

(II) TO PUT ONE POSEIDON SUBMARINE IN DRY DOCK, OPENING UP, BUT NOT DISMANTLING, THE MISSILE TUBES:

(III) TO DELAY THE ALASKA'S TRIALS:

(IV) TO PROCEED WITH THE ALASKA'S TRIALS, AND EFFECT NO COMPENSATION.

3. PERLE OF COURSE FAVOURS (IV), AND THIS APPEARS TO BE THE

3. PERLE OF COURSE FAVOURS (IV), AND THIS APPEARS TO BE THE GENERAL OSD PREFERENCE. SHULTZ DEFINITELY OPPOSES (IV): SOME OF HIS ADVISERS (POL-MIL) FAVOUR (II): SOME (EUR) (I). (III) SEEMS TO HAVE LITTLE SUPPORT, EVEN IN STATE, FOR IT INVOLVES DIRECT INTERFERENCE WITH THE TRIDENT PROGRAMME, WHICH WOULD MAXIMISE CRITICISM FROM THE RIGHT, EG ON THE HILL. (BUT PERLE CLAIMS THAT IT IS HIS PREFERRED FALL-BACK, PERHAPS BECAUSE HE WOULD SEE ADVANTAGE, WHEN WIDER DECISIONS HAVE TO BE TAKEN (AS THE SAL II REGIME RUNS OUT ON 31 DECEMBER) IN HAVING ACCENTUATED THE OPERATIONAL PENALTIES OF FURTHER STRICT US COMPLIANCE.)

4. BURT (WHO FAVOURS (I) TOLD THE PUS ON 16 MAY THAT DECISIONS MIGHT BE TAKEN RATHER QUICKLY. BURT BELIEVES THAT THIS WOULD BE BEST, SINCE PERLE HAVING GONE PUBLIC, HE SEES NO ADVANTAGE IN LETTING THE DEBATE DRAG ON, WITH THE ADMINISTRATION TRYING TO MAINTAIN A HOLDING LINE (EG THE PRESIDENT'S IN LISBON: MY TELNO 1548). HE ALSO TOLD THE PUS THAT HE WAS CONCERNED AT THE LIKELY EUROPEAN REACTION IF OPTION (IV) WERE CHOSEN. THE PUS CONFIRMED THAT THE SECRETARY OF STATE BELIEVED THAT THE IMPACT IN EUROPE WOULD BE VERY DAMAGING IF, WHILE ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS APPEARED TO BE MAKING LITTLE PROGRESS, THE EXISTING ARMS CONTROL REGIME STARTED TO UNRAVEL.

5. BURT HINTED THAT AN EARLY AND HIGH LEVEL UK MESSAGE MIGHT BE TIMELY. WE AGREE. IT NEED NOT, IN OUR VIEW, REFER TO OPTIONS (II) OR (III): THE KEY POINT IS TO WARN THAT (IV) WOULD HAVE A VERY BAD EFFECT THROUGHOUT THE ALLIANCE, AND TO URGE THAT THE US BE SEEN TO MAINTAIN THE PRESIDENT'S POLICY OF NOT UNDERCUTTING THE SALT II LIMITS.

6. THERE ARE OF COURSE MANY IN THE ADMINISTRATION WHO MAINTAIN THAT THE RUSSIANS HAVE BEEN UNDERCUTTING THE ARMS CONTROL REGIME: THAT THE EUROPEAN ALLIES SHOULD BE COMPLAINING ABOUT THE SOVIET NON-COMPLIANCE RECORD: AND THAT THE US SHOULD NOW TAKE A LEAF OUT OF THE SOVIET BOOK. FOR MAXIMUM EFFICACY, A UK MESSAGE SHOULD THEREFORE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE SOVIET RECORD IS INDEED NOT BLEMISH-FREE, AND REFER TO WHAT YOU SAID TO GROMYKO ON 15 MAY ABOUT KRASNOYARSK (FCO TEL NO 509 TO MOSCOW).

7. MY RECOMENDATION, WITH WHICH THE PUS AGREES, IS THAT YOU SHOULD SEND A MESSAGE TO SHULTZ MAKING THE ESSENTIAL POINTS ABOUT LIKELY EUROPEAN AND ALLIED REACTIONS, BUT ADDING THAT YOU HOPE THAT NO U.S. DECISION WOULD BE TAKEN BEFORE THE PRIME MINISTER IF NECESSARY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF PLACING HER VIEWS ON RECORD WITH THE PRESIDENT.

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