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MY TELS NOS 1425 AND 1438: **SALT LIMITS**

## SUMMARY

1. **CONSIDERED US PUBLIC REACTIONS REFLECT GROWING RECOGNITION OF THE POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHANGED US PRESENTATION.** FOR THE PRESENT, A WIN FOR WEINBERGER. STATE'S HOPES THAT THE PROVISIONAL ALCMS DECISION CAN BE REVERSED IN THE AUTUMN NOT WHOLLY REASSURING.

## DETAIL

2. THE US PRESS ON 29 MAY HAS WOKEN UP, AND HIGHLIGHTS COMMENTS BY SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS, AS WELL AS SOME OUTSIDERS, ON THE 27 MAY ANNOUNCEMENT. ACROSS THE SPECTRUM FROM WEINBERGER TO WARNKE THE REJECTION OF THE SALT LIMITS AS A FACTOR PER SE IN STRATEGIC FORCE PLANNING IS SEEN AS SIGNIFICANT. WEINBERGER TOLD JOURNALISTS THAT QUOTE THE PRESIDENT HAS TRAVELLED THAT LAST MILE AND WE ARE NO LONGER BOUND BY THAT FLAWED AGREEMENT (SALT III). IT'S VERY SIMPLE UNQUOTE. ADELMAN SAID THE SAME. NITZE AGREED WITH WEINBERGER, THOUGH ADDING THAT QUOTE THE PRESIDENT WOULD TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE MATTER UNQUOTE IF THE RUSSIANS TOOK THE NECESSARY ACTION IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. WARNKE (ACDA DIRECTOR UNDER CARTER) SAID THAT QUOTE THE NUTS HAVE WON UNQUOTE THE ARMS CONTROL POLICY DEBATE WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION.

3. THE THEORY THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISIONS MAY HAVE DIFFERED IN SIGNIFICANT RESPECTS FROM THE PROVISIONAL APRIL ONES ON WHICH THE ALLIES WERE CONSULTED EMERGES AS A SUB-THEME IN THE PRESS. NITZE IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISIONS WERE QUOTE A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT UNQUOTE FROM THE TENTATIVE DECISIONS DISCUSSED BY HIM AND ROWNY WITH ALLIES. UN-NAMED ADMINISTRATION SOURCES ARE QUOTED AS GIVING, AMONG THE REASONS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DECISIONS, REPUBLICAN POLITICAL PRESSURE ON REAGAN TO ABANDON SALT: A PREFERENCE IN THE WHITE HOUSE TO TAKE ONE BIG DECISION ON THE COOTROVERSIAL SALT ISSUE RATHER THAN DEAL WITH IT PIECEMEAL OVER SEVERAL MONTHS: AND THE FACT THAT ALLIED LEADERS AT TOKYO ALLEGEDLY DID NOT ARGUE STRONGLY FOR MAINTAINING THE SALT REGIME.

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4. PRESS AND ADMINISTRATION VIEWS ON LIKELY SOVIET REACTIONS (AND ANY IMPACT ON SOVIET NEGOTIATING POSITIONS IN GENEVA) ARE MIXED. SOME OF OUR ADMINISTRATION CONTACTS BELIEVE THAT THE REALISATION THAT FAILURE IN GENEVA COULD NOW LEAD TO A VIRTUALLY UNCONSTRAINED STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT COULD SHOCK THE RUSSIANS INTO MAKING MORE SERIOUS EFFORTS AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. (THIS IS, WE UNDERSTAND, KAMPELMAN'S VIEW: WE KNOW THAT IT HAS LONG BEEN LEHMAN'S.) BUT OTHERS JUDGE THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE UNLIKELY TO REACT POSITIVELY IN GENEVA TO WHAT THEY MAY WELL SEE AS A THREAT.

COMMENT

5. THE NEW ELEMENT IN THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT OF 27 MAY LAY OF COURSE NOT IN THE TWO SUBSTANTIVE DECISIONS, BUT IN THEIR PRESENTATION. THE REJECTION OF THE SALT REGIME PER SE WAS NOT FULLY FLAGGED UP DURING THE CONSULTATIONS WITH ALLIES LAST MONTH. THE STATE DEPARTMENT THEORY (PARA 5 OF MY TELNO 1438) THAT, DESPITE THIS PRESENTATION, NO BOATS HAVE BEEN BURNED, AND WIDER POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS MAY LEAD TO DIFFERENT CONCLUSIONS IN NOVEMBER/DECEMBER, IS NOT WHOLLY IMPLAUSIBLE. BUT THE PRESENTATION IS NOT ONE WHICH STATE WOULD HAVE CHOSEN, AND WEINBERGER, ADELMAN AND CO HAVE GONE AS FAR, IN TYING THE PRESIDENT'S HANDS IN ADVANCE, AS THEY COULD HAVE HOPED.

6. MOREOVER, THE SCENERY ON THE INTER-AGENCY STAGE HAS SHIFTED, TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S DISADVANTAGE. SALT-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS (ON WHICH STATE HAVE IN THE PAST CARRIED PARTICULAR WEIGHT) HAVE BEEN RULED IRRELEVANT, AND 2 OF THE 3 NEW CRITERIA (PARA 4 OF TELNO 1438) FOR FUTURE FORCE PLANNING DECISIONS (SOVIET COMPLIANCE, AND SOVIET FORCE PLANNING DECISIONS) ARE ONES ON WHICH THE PENTAGON (OSD/DIA/JCS) TEND TO CALL THE SHOTS.

7. SO, WHILE ALL IS CERTAINLY NOT LOST, THE STATE DEPARTMENT LINE MAY PROVE A LITTLE COMPLACENT. THE NEXT STEP, POST-HALIFAX, IS LIKELY TO BE THE NITZE MID-JUNE TOUR OF ALLIED CAPITALS, BRIEFING ON THE THREE ELEMENTS IN THE SOVIET NON-COMPLIANCE RECORD (KRASNOYARSK, SS24/25, ENCRYPTION) WHICH ALL US AGENCIES REGARD AS IMPORTANT, AND ON WHICH ALL (INCLUDING STATE) BELIEVE THEIR EVIDENCE WHOLLY CONCLUSIVE.

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