

ADVANCE COPIES

18/6

US/SOVIET ARMS CONTROL TALKS

PS  
PS/LADY YOUNG  
PS/MR RENTON  
PS/PUS  
MR ~~DEREK THOMAS~~  
MR GOODALL  
MR RATFORD  
MR ~~DAVID THOMAS~~  
MR DAVID THOMAS

MR POWELL, NO 10 DOWNING ST

MR D NICHOLLS, DUS(P) } MOD  
B. NPS (S)  
DACU  
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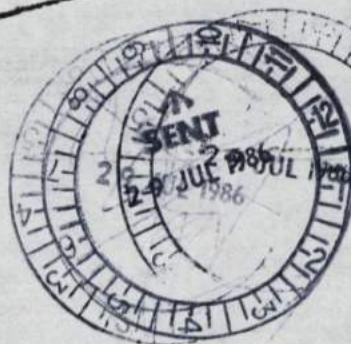
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RESIDENT CLERK

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IMMEDIATE

15.1.85



CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 1987

OF 282300Z JULY 86

INFO PRIORITY BONN, PARIS, UKDEL NATO, MOSCOW, MODUK

MODUK (FOR DACU)

GENEVA NUCLEAR AND SPACE TALKS: PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO GORBACHEV SUMMARY

1. PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO GORBACHEV SENT ON 25 JULY. VIEWS OF ALLIES TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. ADMINISTRATION STILL REFUSING TO COMMENT PUBLICLY ON THE CONTENTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER. DETAIL

2. THE PRESIDENT FINALISED HIS LETTER TO GORBACHEV ON 25 JULY. IT WAS GIVEN TO BESSMERTNYK HERE ON THE SAME DAY AND TO THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY BY HARTMAN ON 26 JULY. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS ALSO SENT LETTERS TO ALLIED LEADERS OVER THE WEEKEND TELLING THEM OF HIS FINAL DECISIONS.

3. THE CONSULTATIONS WITH ALLIES CONDUCTED BY NITZE AND ROWNY ARE REGARDED HERE AS HAVING BEEN SUCCESSFUL. THE STATE DEPARTMENT THINK THAT THEY REVEALED BROAD SUPPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION AND BELIEVE THAT THE MAJOR COMMENTS MADE BY ALLIES WERE REFLECTED IN THE FINAL VERSION OF THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS THE CASE AS FAR AS THE POINTS MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND MR RENTON ARE CONCERNED; THE REFERENCE TO THIRD COUNTRY SYSTEMS HAS APPARENTLY BEEN DROPPED AND THE DESIRABILITY OF ACHIEVING 50 PER CENT REDUCTIONS IN START HAS BEEN EMPHASISED ALTHOUGH THE POSSIBILITY OF GOING FOR SMALLER REDUCTIONS AS AN INTERIM MEASURE HAS NOT BEEN DELETED.

4. ON THE INTERPRETATION OF THE ABM TREATY, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO GORBACHEV...

4. ON THE INTERPRETATION OF THE ABM TREATY, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO GORBACHEV REMAINS AMBIGUOUS AND STILL SPEAKS OF RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND ASSOCIATED TESTING BEING PERMITTED DURING THE PERIOD OF COMMITMENT TO THE TREATY. HOWEVER, THE POINTS MADE BY ALLIES, INCLUDING THE UK, ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF STAYING WITHIN THE RESTRICTIVE INTERPRETATION OF THE TREATY HAVE BEEN REFLECTED IN THE PRESIDENT'S NEW LETTERS TO ALLIED LEADERS. THESE APPARENTLY CONTAIN A REAFFIRMATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION THAT, WHILE IT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO OBSERVE ONLY THE BROADER INTERPRETATION OF THE TREATY, IT STILL INTENDS TO CONDUCT THE SDI RESEARCH PROGRAMME WITHIN THE MORE RESTRICTIVE INTERPRETATION AS LONG AS THE PROGRAMME IS ADEQUATELY SUPPORTED AND FUNDED.

5. THE WHITE HOUSE ISSUED A SHORT ANNOUNCEMENT (TEXT BY BAG) ON 25 JULY THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD RESPONDED TO RECENT SOVIET ARMS CONTROL PROPOSALS IN A PRIVATE LETTER TO GORBACHEV. THE ANNOUNCEMENT ALSO SAID THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS IN GENEVA WERE ENHANCED IF THE US/SOVIET DIALOGUE WAS A CONFIDENTIAL ONE. THERE WILL THEREFORE BE NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TERMS OF THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER AND THE WHITE HOUSE HAVE DECIDED TO AVOID EVEN BACKGROUND BRIEFINGS FOR THE PRESS, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT. ALTHOUGH SOME ASPECTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S IDEAS HAVE NOW LEAKED, NONE OF THE MEDIA COVERAGE HAS SO FAR BEEN ON THE MARK.

6. OFFICIALS ARE NOW TURNING THEIR ATTENTION TO THE FOLLOW-UP WORK TO BE DONE BEFORE THE NST NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES RESUME ON 18 SEPTEMBER.

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