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Authority NND 981511

By TB NARA Date 8/1/00

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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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FM USDEL SALT V
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1072
BT
TOP SECRET USDEL SALT V 0808

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RECVD: 14 JUL 71
6:12AM

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FOR SECRETARY ROGERS, SECRETARY LAIRD, ADMIRAL MOORER, AND MR. KISSINGER FROM AMBASSADOR SMITH

SUBJECT ABM BAN

1. IN JULY 13 POST-PLenary, PURSUANT TO WHITE HOUSE INSTRUCTIONS, SMITH SAID TO SEMENOV THAT HE UNDERSTOOD SOME SOVIET OFFICIALS FELT THE U.S. HAD NOT BEEN SERIOUS IN PROPOSING AN ABM BAN, BUT HAD PUT IT FORWARD FOR PROPAGANDA. SMITH WAS AUTHORIZED TO SAY THAT THE BAN IS A SERIOUS PROPOSAL. HE WAS INSTRUCTED TO SOUND OUT SEMENOV AS TO WHETHER THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WAS INTERESTED IN PURSUING IT. SMITH HAD NOT FORMALLY TABLED A BAN BECAUSE HE WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE OFFICIAL SOVIET POSITION.

2. SEMENOV ASKED WHETHER HIS UNDERSTANDING WAS CORRECT THAT THE U.S. WOULD BE PREPARED TO SET FORTH ITS VIEWS ON THIS ALTERNATIVE IN DETAIL IF THE SOVIET SIDE SHOWED INTEREST IN THE MATTER. HE ALSO ASKED WHETHER HIS UNDERSTANDING WAS CORRECT THAT ELABORATION OF U.S. VIEWS COULD TAKE PLACE IN A LESS FORMAL MANNER THAN IN PLENARY.

3. SMITH SAID THAT, ON THE SUBSTANCE, HE WOULD LIMIT HIMSELF AT PRESENT TIME TO WHAT HE HAD ALREADY SAID. AS FAR AS PROCEDURE WAS CONCERNED, IF THE TWO SIDES WERE TO PURSUE THIS QUESTION, HE WOULD BE WILLING TO DO SO EITHER IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH SEMENOV OR IN A MEETING MORE RESTRICTED THAN A PLENARY. FOR THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE MERELY TO SOUND OUT SEMENOV AND TO LEARN WHETHER THE SOVIET SIDE WOULD BE INTERESTED.

4. SEMENOV SAID "FRANKLY" HE HAD BROUGHT INSTRUCTIONS FOR THIS EVENTUALITY, TO THE FOLLOWING EFFECT--HE WAS TO LISTEN CAREFULLY TO U.S. CONSIDERATIONS WITH RESPECT TO THIS QUESTION TO DETERMINE THEIR SUBSTANCE AND REAL SIGNIFICANCE. HE DID NOT HAVE TO ASK FOR ADDITIONAL REACTIONS FROM MOSCOW BEFORE RESPONDING TO SMITH'S QUESTION. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT HE HAD ASKED WHAT PROCEDURE SMITH HAD IN MIND FOR SETTING FORTH THE U.S. VIEWS WHICH HE EVIDENTLY PLANNED TO EXPRESS.

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5. SEMENOV SAID THAT THE TWO SIDES WERE NOW COMING CLOSE TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE QUESTION OF LIMITING ABMS. IT WOULD BE WISE TO CONSIDER WHAT THE TWO SIDES HAD TO SAY WITHOUT PREJUDICE. THE SOVIET SIDE WOULD BE INTERESTED TO HEAR U.S. VIEWS IN THIS CONNECTION. SEMENOV WOULD REPORT SMITH'S APPROACH TO HIS CAPITAL, AND HE COULD TELL SMITH NOW THAT HE WOULD WISH TO HEAR U.S. VIEWS IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE. SMITH SAID HE WOULD ALSO REPORT THIS CONVERSATION TO WASHINGTON AND WOULD LATER BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO DETERMINE HOW TO PROCEED.

6. IN SEPARATE CONTEMPORANEOUS CONVERSATION, KISHILOV RAISED QUESTION OF ZERO ABM LEVEL WITH GARTHOFF, ASKING WHETHER U.S. HAD INDEED BEEN SERIOUS ABOUT ITS PROPOSAL FOR AN ABM BAN AND WOULD AGAIN RAISE IT. GARTHOFF STATED THAT THE U.S. PROPOSAL WAS QUITE SERIOUS, AND THE U.S. REMAINED INTERESTED IN SOVIET REACTION. KISHILOV SAID MOSCOW WAS "NOW INTERESTED," AND URGED U.S. TO RAISE MATTER, STRONGLY IMPLYING SOVIET DELEGATION HAD CONTINGENT GUIDANCE FOR FAVORABLE RESPONSE IF U.S. ADVANCED IDEA IN HELSINKI.

7. A TALKING PAPER OUTLINING THE CASE FOR A BAN WILL BE FORWARDED TO WASHINGTON BEFORE MATTER IS AGAIN RAISED WITH SOVIETS. SMITH

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