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SALT

SECSTATE PLEASE PASS SECDEF

SUBJECT: SALT: UK LETTER ON FBS

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF NOVEMBER 28 LETTER CONCERNING FBS CIRSULATED TO COUNCIL MEMBERS BY UK PERMREP. ETTER REFERS TO NOVEMBER 15 CONSULTATION BY AMBASSADOR FARLEY, WELCOMES U.S. CONTINUED REJECTION OF SOVIET POSITION ON FBS, SUPPORTS GENERALIZED NON-CIRCUMVENTION FORMULA, SUGGESTS COUNCIL DISCUSSION OF FORMULA'S IMPLICATIONS AND WHETHER IT OR ANY OTHER SOLUTION WOULD MEET CERTAIN DESIDERATA, AND RELAYS PRELIMINARY UK DOUBT CONCERNING WISDOM OF TRANSFERRING FBS PROBLEM TO MBFR. LETTER CLOSES BY SUGGESTING EARLY COUNCIL MEETING ON FBS PROBLEM IN ORDER THAT U.S. MIGHT TAKE ALLIED VIEWS INTO ACCOUNT IN PREPARING FOR SALT TWO-2. AT NOVEMBER 29 NAC SYG LUNS REFERRED TO LETTER, AND COUNCIL AGREED TO MEET CONCERNING IT DECEMBER 15. END SUMMARY.

BEGIN TEXT:

1. IN MY REMARKS AT THE COUNCIL MEETING ON 15 NOVEMBER HELD TO DISCUSS WITH AMBASSADOR FARLEY THE UNITED STATES' PLANS FOR THE FIRST SESSION OF SALT II, I WELCOMED THE LINE TAKEN ON THE FORWARD-BASED SYSTEMS IN THE LETTER CIRCULATED BY THE US DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE ON 10 NOVEMBER, AND SAID THAT MY

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AUTHORITIES HOPED SHORTLY TO BE ABLE TO MAKE A CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF THIS PROBLEM.

2. WE WERE GLAD TO NOTE THAT THE US DELEGATION DOES NOT PLAN TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN RAISING THIS PROBLEM IN SALT II AND, IF THE SOVIET DELEGATION RAISES IT, WILL CONTINUE TO REJECT ANY CONTENTION THAT FBS ARE "STRATEGIC". FROM THE NATO POINT OF VIEW, THE MOST SATISFACTORY SOLUTION WOULD BE TO DISPOSE OF THE FBS PROBLEM WITHOUT ANY COMMITMENT BEING UNDERTAKEN ON EITHER SIDE. WE ACCEPT HOWEVER THAT THIS MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE, AND, ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT MEANS WILL HAVE TO BE FOUND AT SOME POINT TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF NON-CENTRAL SYSTEMS, WE AGREE THAT THE GENERALISED NON-CIRCUMVENTION FORMULA PROBABLY PROVIDES THE LINE OF APPROACH LEAST LIKELY TO BE HARMFUL TO NATO'S INTERESTS. BEFORE SUCH A FORMULA IS PROPOSED TO THE SOVIET DELEGATION WE HOPE THAT THE COUNCIL WILL BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THE PRECISE TERMS AND TO DISCUSS THE IMPLICATIONS. WE BELIEVE IT WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR THE COUNCIL TO UNDERSTAND:-

A. WHAT CONSTRAINTS THE US WOULD REGARD SUCH A FORMULA AS IMPOSING ON THEIR FORWARD-BASED SYSTEMS ASSIGNED TO NATO;

B. WHETHER THESE CONSTRAINTS WOULD IN ANY WAY INHIBIT US ASSISTANCE TO THEIR ALLIES IN MAINTAINING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEIR NATO-ASSIGNED DUAL-ROLE AIRCRAFT; AND

C. WHAT CONSTRAINTS, AND IN RESPECT OF WHAT SYSTEMS, THE US WOULD EXPECT THE SOVIET UNION TO OBSERVE.

3. WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THIS LINE OF OF APPROACH OR WHETHER IT IS NECESSARY TO LOOK AT OTHER ALTERNATIVES, THE UK SUGGEST THAT WE SHOULD AIM TO ENSURE THAT, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, ANY PROPOSED SOLUTION MEETS THE FOLLOWING DESIDERATA. WE SHOULD SEEK TO:-

A. AVOID ANY CONSTRAINTS ON US FBS WHICH WOULD LIMIT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CONTRIBUTION THEY MAKE TO THE DEFENSIVE AND DETERRENT STRATEGY OF THE ALLIANCE;

B. AVOID ANY RESTRICTIONS ON US FREEDOM TO INTRODUCE REINFORCEMENTS AT TIME OF CRISIS AND FOR EXERCISES;

C. AVOID ANY SIGNIFICANT INHIBITIONS ON US ABILITY TO ASSIST

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THEIR NATO ALLIES IN MAINTAINING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEIR OWN TACTICAL NUCLEAR DELIVERY SYSTEMS;

D. AVOID ANY COMMITMENT, AS A RESULT OF AGREEMENTS IN THE SALT FRAMEWORK, WHICH WOULD LIMIT WESTERN OPTIONS IN THEHANDLING OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR DELIVERY SYSTEMS IN MBFR NEGOTIATIONS;

E. ENSURE THAT, IF THE US HAVE TO ACCEPT CONSTRAINTS ON THEIR FBS, RECIPROCAL CONSTRAINTS ARE APPLIED TO SOVIET NON-CENTRAL SYSTEMS DIRECTED AGAINST TARGETS IN NATO EUROPE; AND

F. ENSURE THAT AIRCRAFT AND OTHER SYSTEMS OF ALLIED FORCES WOULD NOT BE SUBJECT TO ANY CONSTRAINTS AGREED BILATERALLY BETWEEN THE US AND THE SOVIET UNION.

4. THESE DESIDERATA ARE NOT LISTED IN ANY SPECIAL ORDER OF PREFERENCE. THEY REPRESENT WHAT MAY BE SEEN, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF NATO'S DEFENCE INTERESTS, AS AN OPTIMUM POSITION. IN ANY EVENTUAL SOLUTION IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE THEM ALL IN FULL. WE SUGGEST HOWEVER THAT THE COUNCIL WILL WISH TO WEIGH CAREFULLY THE IMPLICATIONS OF ANY PROPOSED SOLUTION WHICH DOES NOT MEET ANY ONE OF THEM.

5. WE SHALL BE GLAD TO DISCUSS THE ABOVE IDEAS IN A RESTRICTED SESSION OF THE COUNCIL AS SOON AS THIS CAN CONVENIENTLY BE ARRANGED. AT THE SAME TIME WE SHALL BE READY TO EXPRESS OUR VIEWS ON OTHER POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO THE FBS PROBLEM, INCLUDING THE RELATIONSHIP OF THIS PROBLEM TO THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS, ON WHICH AMBASSADOR FARLEY INVITED COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL. OUR PRELIMINARY VIEW IS THAT THE DISADVANTAGES OF TRANSFERRING THE FBS PROBLEM TO THE MBFR FORUM WOULD BE LIKELY TO OUTWEIGH ANY POSSIBLE ADVANTAGES.

6. WE SUGGEST THERE WOULD BE ADVANTAGE IN HOLDING AN EARLY DISCUSSION OF THE FBIS PROBLEM, SO THAT THE US AUTJORITIES ARE ABLE TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE VIEWS OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE IN THE COURSE OF PREPARING THEIR POSITION FOR THE SECOND SESSION OF THE SALT II NEGOTIATIONS W HICH SEEMS LIKELY TO TAKE PLACE IN THE FIRST PART OF NEXT YEAR.

7. I AM SENDING COPIES OF THIS LETTER TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE

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COUNCIL.
END TEXT.
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