

*102 says its on SALT TALKS*

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PENTAGON-NUCLEAR

BY FRED. S. HOFFMAN

WASHINGTON (AP) -- SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JAMES SCHLESINGER AND THE MILITARY CHIEFS ARE IN THE DARK AS TO WHAT SPECIFIC NUCLEAR ARMS LIMITATION PROPOSALS PRESIDENT NIXON WILL PUSH WITH SOVIET LEADERS, PENTAGON SOURCES SAY.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCHLESINGER AND THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF WERE PRESENTED AT A NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING PRESIDED OVER BY NIXON LAST FRIDAY.

BUT SOURCES SAY NIXON AND SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER LEFT FOR EUROPE ON TUESDAY WITHOUT TELLING DEFENSE LEADERS WHAT OPTIONS THE PRESIDENT HAS DECIDED TO EXERCISE IN HIS MOSCOW NEGOTIATIONS.

THIS, ALONG WITH REPORTS OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCHLESINGER AND KISSINGER, RAISED DOUBTS AS TO WHETHER A "HARMONIOUS NATIONAL POSITION" WAS ACHIEVED, AS SCHLESINGER PREDICTED IT WOULD BE.

OFFICIALS DECLINE TO DISCUSS THE PENTAGON'S RECOMMENDATIONS. BUT IT IS KNOWN THE MILITARY CHIEFS ARE OPPOSED TO EXTENSION OF THE PRESENT TEMPORARY STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS (SALT) AGREEMENT WITHOUT CHANGES BEYOND ITS 1977 EXPIRATION DATE.

THE CHIEFS, AND OTHER SENIOR DEFENSE OFFICIALS, BELIEVE THIS WOULD LEAVE THE RUSSIANS FREE TO EXPLOIT THEIR ADVANTAGE IN NUMBERS OF MISSILES BY DEPLOYING NEWLY DEVELOPED LAUNCHERS ARMED WITH BIG NUCLEAR-TIPPED MULTIPLE WAR HEADS (MIRVS) NUMBERING IN THE THOUSANDS.

THIS, THEY FEEL, WOULD THREATEN TO TIP THE BALANCE AGAINST THE UNITED STATES, WHICH HAS SEEN ITS QUALITATIVE ADVANTAGE IN MIRVS START TO FADE SINCE THE TEMPORARY SALT AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO.

SCHLESINGER HAS INDICATED HE WOULD GO ALONG WITH AN "AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE" TO LIMIT DEPLOYMENT OF ADVANCED MISSILES WITH MULTIPLE WAR HEADS. BUT SCHLESINGER HAS SAID SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE SAFEGUARDED WITH MEANS FOR VERIFICATION TO PROTECT AGAINST CHEATING.

THERE IS A WIDELY HELD VIEW AMONG KEY PENTAGON OFFICIALS THAT THE RUSSIANS WILL NOT GET DOWN TO REAL GIVE-AND-TAKE BARGAINING UNTIL THE LAST YEAR OF THE TEMPORARY AGREEMENT, THAT THEY SEE NO NEED TO RUSH INTO ANOTHER INTERIM PACT WITH POSSIBLE HAZARDS.

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