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Defense

GRS 450

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FM F.C.O. 211600 Z SEPT 79

TO ROUTINE WASHINGTON

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1257 OF 21 SEPTEMBER

INFO UKMIS GENEVA(FOR CTB DELEGATION), MOSCOW, MODUK (DS17)

ks
Rms

COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN NEGOTIATIONS

YOUR TELNO 2749: COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN.

1. THE MINISTER OF STATE EXPLAINED THE BASIS OF MINISTERS' DECISION ON NSS ON UK TERRITORY TO YORK, MARCUM, OKUN, STEINER AND DOBBINS ON 21 SEPTEMBER.
2. MR HURD SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THERE WERE DOUBTS IN SOME QUARTERS IN LONDON, AS IN WASHINGTON, OVER THE BENEFITS TO BE GAINED FROM A CTB ON ITS PRESENT BASIS, IT WAS RECOGNISED THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS HAD RUN FOR OVER TWO YEARS AND MINISTERS WANTED TO MAKE THEM SUCCEED. IN REACHING A DECISION ON NSS THE FINANCIAL ELEMENT HAD BEEN SECONDARY TO THE INDEFENSIBILITY OF THE SOVIET DEMAND, WHICH HAD BEEN DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO COUNTER US INSISTENCE ON NSS IN THE SOVIET UNION. IT WAS DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TO THE CTB WOULD BE DETERMINED BY NSS IN THE UK. BY STICKING TO ONE NSS, THE UK WOULD BE ON STRONG GROUND WITH PUBLIC OPINION. THE DECISION WOULD NOT READILY BE REVERSED, ALTHOUGH THE ALTERNATIVE OF UK WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SVA WAS OBVIOUSLY AN IMPORTANT MATTER WHICH WOULD NEED CAREFUL CONSIDERATION AND UK/US CONSULTATION.
3. THE MAIN POINTS MADE BY THE US SIDE WERE AS FOLLOWS:
 - A) THE US WOULD FIRMLY SUPPORT THE BRITISH POSITION BUT IT WAS NOT WHAT THEY HAD WANTED AND THEY DOUBTED WHETHER IT WOULD WORK.
 - B) A TENABLE TECHNICAL CASE COULD BE MADE FOR TWO OR THREE NSS IN THE UK ITSELF OR FOR ONE OR TWO IN THE DEPENDENT TERRITORIES.
 - C) THE POLITICAL DIMENSION WAS ALSO IMPORTANT. THE US WERE CONCERNED THAT THE UK POSITION WOULD LEAD TO CONTINUING STALEMATE OR EVEN TO UNRAVELLING WHAT HAD BEEN ACHIEVED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS SO FAR (IN DISCUSSIONS WITH OFFICIALS, THE AMERICANS SAID THAT UK WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SVA MIGHT INCREASE THIS RISK.) THEY WANTED A SOLID ACHIEVEMENT BY THE NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE.

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- D) THE SALT DEBATE IN THE US WAS NATURALLY PRE--OCCUPYING ATTENTION BUT THE COMMITMENT OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND HIS SENIOR ADVISERS TO CTB HAD NOT CHANGED.
- E) WHEN THE CTB NEGOTIATIONS WERE VIEWED IN THE OVERALL CONTEXT OF THE ANGLO/US NUCLEAR RELATIONSHIP, THE RELATIVELY VERY SMALL COST OF NSS BECAME MORE EVIDENT.

4. FULL RECORDS OF THIS AND MEETING WITH OFFICIALS FOLLOW BY BAG.

CARRINGTON

FILES

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PLANNING STAFF
PUS D
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PS/MR HURD

PS/MR BLAKER
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SIR A DUFF

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