

IMMEDIATE

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FM WASHINGTON 272355Z SEP 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 2792 OF 27 SEPTEMBER

AND TO IMMEDIATE: UKMIS NEW YORK (FOR SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTY)

US ANTI-BALLISTIC MISSILE SYSTEMS

1. THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE TOLD US IN CONFIDENCE THAT, FOLLOWING PRESIDENT REAGAN'S SPEECH ON 24 MARCH ABOUT FUTURE ANTI-BALLISTIC MISSILE SYSTEMS (MY TELNO 739), THE INTER-AGENCY GROUP REVIEWING THE POSSIBILITIES HAS ALMOST COMPLETED ITS WORK. A REPORT WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE WHITE HOUSE IN MID-OCTOBER. AS A RESULT OF THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE AND THE ENTHUSIASM OF SOME OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISERS, THERE IS A GOOD DEAL OF MOMENTUM IN FAVOUR OF A SUBSTANTIALLY EXPANDED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. THERE OBVIOUSLY WOULD BE VERY CONSIDERABLE LEAD TIMES IN RELATION TO THE EVENTUAL TESTING OF ANY SPACE-BASED SYSTEMS. EMPHASIS WOULD BE PLACED ON THE FACT THAT INCREASED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT WOULD HAVE NO NEAR TERM IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ANTI-BALLISTIC MISSILE AND OUTER SPACE TREATIES.

2. WE HAVE BEEN IMPRESSING ON US OFFICIALS THE IMPLICATIONS PLANS OF THIS KIND COULD HAVE FOR BRITISH AND FRENCH SYSTEMS, AND THE NEED FOR CONSULTATION ABOUT THE TERMS OF ANY FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENT E.G. OF AN INTENSIFIED R AND D PROGRAMME. US OFFICIALS HAVE INDICATED PRIVATELY THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THE PRIME MINISTER COULD TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY DURING HER TALK WITH THE PRESIDENT TO EMPHASIZE THAT US EXPLORATION OF THIS AREA OF TECHNOLOGY IS OF DIRECT CONCERN TO US: AND THE NEED FOR DUE CONSULTATION WITH US ABOUT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANY FURTHER STEPS.

3. IF THE SECRETARY OF STATE AGREES, WE SHALL BRING THIS TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S ATTENTION ON HER ARRIVAL.

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