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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-2600

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Sally  
As promised

November 29, 1991

In reply refer to:  
I-91/24367

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MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, SDS&VP

SUBJECT: Debrief of 27 November Working Group with Soviets (U)

(S) Attached is an information memorandum that Courtney put together Wednesday night (with help from myself and a few others) after the second Safety, Security, and Dismantlement (SSD) working group. I'd like to offer some additional observations that, for various reasons, are not reflected in that memorandum:

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Discussing rapid disablement (removal of one or more critical components), Zelentsov stated that such components can be removed at military bases by military personnel. While he did say that the Soviets "attached great importance to the removal of critical components," he did not agree that rapid disablement should be discussed bilaterally. In fact, when answering Barker's direct question of how long rapid disablement would take if the Soviets decided to do so, Zelentsov replied that it "was not a question that we should address." Barker repeatedly tried to get Zelentsov to clarify whether current Soviet plans call for disablement significantly prior to dismantlement, or simply as part of the dismantlement process; he noted, for example, that the U.S. concept calls for removal of critical components from AFAPs by the end of 1992, although dismantlement could require an additional two years. Zelentsov's response ("we may do things differently...no assistance is needed") left me with the impression that rapid disablement probably was not being carried out, and that Zelentsov (supported by Koltunov) would oppose any further discussion on this score.

At least twice during the session, Courtney was very straightforward in telling the Soviets why the U.S. was so interested in their plans for rapid disablement. He mentioned, for example, political instabilities in the former USSR, the large numbers of weapons in storage, armed clashes between various nationalist/ethnic groups, and even press reports of an unauthorized missile launch. At one point, Zelentsov (in what I viewed as a rather sarcastic tone) "thanked" Courtney for his "advice," and suggested that the U.S. should be more concerned with "terrorists" than the Soviets because our military transferred custody of weapons to civilians (i.e., DOE) much earlier in the dismantlement process. "We have army guards," stressed Zelentsov, "and our central authorities control the weapons, not the republics. This is the way for the future, too. Thus, your concern over our weapons is not compatible with our president's position (on maintaining central control.)" When Courtney persisted, Zelentsov "thanked" Courtney "for taking Soviet developments so close to heart."

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-- The lack of Soviet "transparency" seemed even greater to me than the memorandum might suggest. When the DOE rep (Turner) asked for a general description of a Soviet dismantlement facility, Zelentsov responded that Turner should "just look at yours." The Soviets refused to say how many facilities they had, where they were located, and what their capacity was, although Turner had given such general information on Pantex. Such information, the Soviets insisted, was "not needed" and would not help the U.S. identify how it could help the Soviets. Zelentsov's general attitude was summed up in a subsequent exchange with Turner on transportation issues, when he stated: "When you ask questions, tell me why you need the answers. If you do, then we'll consider answering."

-- In my view, Barker deserves credit for finally cracking the Soviets' resistance to explaining any specific problems and their overall "trust us, we're not irresponsible, but we just need more money" approach. Midway in the session, Barker smoothly but pointedly reminded Zelentsov that his report to SecDef would have "great effect" on whether any DOD funds (i.e., of those recently earmarked by Congress) would be spent for assisting the Soviets in dismantlement. After quoting floor statements by Nunn and Lugar that replayed pleas from various Soviet "experts" for U.S. assistance, Barker observed that Zelentsov -- whom he called a "true military professional" -- in effect was informing the U.S. that the Senators' reasons for proposing assistance were wrong, and that the problem areas identified by the Senators (e.g., shortage of transportation and trained personnel) did not exist. This led Zelentsov, for the first time, to admit to a specific need, i.e., specialized land transporters. Barker used this opening to mention that DOE might have some "extra trains." In a follow-on corridor conversation with Kozko, Barker extracted some additional hints of requirements for railcars and weapon/component containers. (FYI: Unused safe-secure rail cars are sitting at Pantex, since DOE now uses only the specialize trucks "SSTs." Whether there are enough to have any impact on the Soviet shortage, and the costs of converting them to the Soviet rail guage and transporting them to the former USSR are issues that would have to be addressed later.)

(§) In conversation with a few of us after the Soviets left, Courtney said that he would recommend a two-week trip to the former USSR in December, the first part of which would be briefings in Kiev, Minsk and Alma Ata. He also repeated his earlier suggestion that the U.S. somehow press the Soviets for a visit to a dismantlement and military storage facility, and that we offer them an early trip to Pantex.

*Leo Michel*

Leo Michel

Office of the Secretary of Defense  
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS  
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November 27, 1991

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TO: Steering Group  
FROM: SSD Working Group  
SUBJECT: Key Points of Second Working Group Meeting,  
November 27, afternoon and evening

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Summary

o Gen-Lt Zelentsov said rapid disablement of weapons destined for destruction was not difficult and could be done quickly. When we stressed that this be done, he was noncommittal. Zelentsov claimed that he himself had the authority to order such a step.

o Zelentsov asserted that all nuclear weapons were in the four main republics.

o The Soviet side bridled at our technical queries about dismantlement facilities and transport, but we insisted that answers would help the U.S. determine where assistance could be provided. Zelentsov said the Soviet side would answer technical questions at the next session. Koltunov growled that they had to be directly related to the Working Group's tasking.

o Zelentsov suggested that the next session be held in Moscow and include more experts, and that we convey in advance a list of questions. We agreed. At our urging Zelentsov promised to prepare a list of items for possible U.S. assistance, including reasons and costs.

o The Kazakh and Belarus reps did not attend the second session; only Zelentsov, Koltunov, and Kozko were there.

Disablement

o Disablement and dismantling were not new issues, Zelentsov said. Until now the USSR has had the people, facilities, and experience needed.

o We stressed the urgency and importance of rapid disablement of the weapons Gorbachev pledged to destroy, noting the risk of theft.

o Zelentsov was noncommittal. The U.S. viewed the risk of theft as higher than does the USSR, he asserted. The central government had control and would have it. An impatient Koltunov chimed in that the USSR had no problem which early disablement would solve. Zelentsov agreed that disablement was important and would be addressed.

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o Zelentsov said that disablement could be done quickly if necessary. It would not affect dismantlement rates. The current plan was to disable weapons just prior to shipment for dismantlement. No political decision was required. "I can order this."

o Removing the critical components we had cited was not a problem, Zelentsov said, but other (unspecified) options for disablement existed. If the U.S. knew of additional ways, the Soviet side would be interested to hear them.

o The U.S. side pointed to the instabilities, armed conflict, accidental missile launches, and failed coup in the USSR as reasons for urgency in disablement. Zelentsov said he now understood U.S. concerns, but weapons remained in secure military custody and controlled by the center.

#### Dismantlement and Transport

o We urged the Soviet side to identify ways to increase the pace of dismantlement, and how the U.S. could help.

o Zelentsov retorted that the U.S. dismantlement time-frame seemed long. The added Soviet dismantlements would require major financial investment, people, equipment and facilities (including storage space for materials), and time. Only more state funds could speed the pace. This could not be done at the expense of the population's needs.

o Zelentsov said a comprehensive plan for all of this was being developed. He quoted dismantlement deadlines promised by Gorbachev. They assumed a constant budget at existing levels. The MoD paid MAPI for dismantlement. The U.S. was not in a position to help the USSR with technical and construction assistance, he contended.

o Zelenstov said decisions were needed on what to do with the unanticipated, surplus Pu and HEU to be recovered from the added weapons to be dismantled. Before, such materials were recycled to new weapons.

o Zelentsov refused to respond to specific questions about Soviet dismantlement facilities and transport. He and Koltunov protested that this information was unneeded. Transportation capabilities of both sides did need to be addressed and evaluated, Zelentsov noted.

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### Transparency and Assistance

o We argued that such information could help identify ways in which the U.S. could help. Zelentsov gave an example which purported to show that more railcars were needed to move weapons to be eliminated. He jokingly said he would be happy to receive a gift of any free DoE trains.

o We again urged the Soviet side to identify ways in which the U.S. could help. Koltunov said that if the U.S. side had ideas on how to help in specific ways, the Soviet side would be prepared to hear them.

### Special Commission and the Republics

o Asked about the special commission cited by Obukhov on Monday, Koltunov said it would monitor arms talks as well as nuclear arms withdrawals and eliminations, but it would have no role in command and control.

o Asked about which republics would be represented, Koltunov said those where nuclear weapons were located. Asked if these were the republics represented in our meetings, Zelentsov paused for awhile, then said yes.

### Accidents

o When we noted our experience in responding to the Palomares and Thule accidents, Zelentsov asserted that the USSR had not experienced any such accidents.

### Comments During the Break -- Kozko Counters Zelentsov

o Kozko countered Zelentsov's claim on Monday that different people were needed for assembly and disassembly. Resources for dismantlement were not so much of a problem since fewer new weapons were being built and the people involved were now available to help dismantle.

o Kozko said more rail transport containers hardened to survive severe accidents were needed, as were simpler containers for permanent storage of Pu. Sufficient space was lacking to store these containers and protect them against fire, floods, and other hazards.

o Kozko said he had worked at a facility which did both assembly and dismantlement.

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