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W. J. D.

November 27, 1991

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

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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