

Office of the Secretary of Defense  
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OR: 16 -M- 0888

29 September 1981

ISSUE: Joint Statement on Beginning TNF Negotiations

DISCUSSION: During their meeting at the UN on 23 September, Secretary Haig and Gromyko reached agreement on the following joint statement to announce the 30 November start of TNF negotiations in Geneva:

-- At their meeting on September 23, 1981, the US Secretary of State, Alexander M. Haig, Jr., and the USSR Foreign Minister, Andrey A. Gromyko (Soviet text will be reversed), exchanged views regarding arms control involving those nuclear arms which were earlier discussed between the US and USSR (Soviet text will reverse) in Geneva.

-- They agreed on the need to hold formal (Soviet text will say "serious") negotiations on such arms and on behalf of their governments agreed to begin these negotiations on November 30 in Geneva, Switzerland (Soviet text will omit "Switzerland"). The US side will be represented at the negotiations by a delegation headed by Ambassador Paul Nitze and the Soviet side will be represented by a delegation headed by Ambassador Yu. Kvitsinsky (Soviet text will reverse).

-- Both sides believe in the importance of these negotiations for enhancing stability and international security and pledged to spare no effort to reach an appropriate agreement."

ACTION: Ambassador Bennett at NATO, and other key Embassies have informed Allies of the joint statement and the nature of the discussion, which has been characterized as "frank and businesslike." The statement represents a fair balance of competing objectives: On the Soviet side, to stress the continuity of these negotiations with previous discussion of the subject, and, on ours, to keep the substantive agenda for the talks as open as possible. Soviet attempts to include language defining the subject matter as systems "in Europe" were notably mild in comparison with earlier discussions, but the effort to include "equality and equal security" as the basic principle, which we consider to have the same object, was stronger. Beyond the agreed language, Secretary Haig made it clear that negotiations are to be without preconditions, and that each side is free to raise whatever issues it wishes.

Work continues on preparing the USG negotiating position with an Interagency Group meeting scheduled for Monday, 5 October.

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