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SECRET

PM/DCA:MPALMER-EUR/SOV:MMCLEAN:PF
3/14/80:EXT.28040
D:WCHRISTOPHER

NSC:DAARON NSC:MBREMENT
JCS:LT.GEN PUSTOY
EUR:RBARRY
S/P:PWILSON

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ACDA:REARLE OUSO/PP:WSLOCOMBE
CIA: PM:JKAHAN
S/MS:MSHULMAN
S/S-0:

NIACT/IMMEDIATE MOSCOW NIACT, GENEVA IMMEDIATE

NODIS
GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR FLOWERREE ONLY

E.O. 11652: RDS-3, 3/14/90 {CHRISTOPHER, W.}

TAGS: PARM, UR

SUBJECT: SVERDLOVSK BW INCIDENT

1. {SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT}.

2. SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED. THERE IS DISTURBING EVIDENCE POINTING TO THE RELEASE OF LETHAL BIOLOGICAL AGENT AS THE CAUSE OF NUMEROUS DEATHS IN SVERDLOVSK, USSR, IN APRIL-MAY 1979. THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY'S CONCLUSION IS THAT THE RELEASED QUANTITY OF AGENT EXCEEDED THAT JUSTIFIED FOR PROPHYLACTIC, PROTECTIVE OR OTHER PEACEFUL PURPOSES. AMBASSADOR WATSON IS INSTRUCTED TO RAISE THIS MATTER WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KORNIYENKO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. AMBASSADOR FLOWERREE SHOULD INFORM AMBASSADOR ISSRAELYAN OF THE DEMARCHE PROMPTLY AFTER IT IS MADE IN MOSCOW. END SUMMARY.

3. WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SITUATION REPORTED IN PARAGRAPH 2 -- THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY'S INFORMATION ABOUT AN INCIDENT IN SVERDLOVSK IN APRIL 1979 AND THEIR CONCLUSIONS. WE WISH TO MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO DISCUSS THIS

ACCIDENTAL

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ISSUE BILATERALLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE V OF THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS (BW) CONVENTION. SPEED IS ESSENTIAL IN VIEW OF THE END OF THE BW CONVENTION REVIEW CONFERENCE ON MARCH 21, AND OUR DESIRE TO GIVE THE SOVIETS AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE TO GIVE US A CONSIDERED RESPONSE. WE WOULD LIKE AT LEAST A PRELIMINARY RESPONSE BEFORE THE END OF THE REVIEW CONFERENCE.

4. AMBASSADOR WATSON SHOULD PERSONALLY MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO KORNIYENKO OR, SHOULD HE BE UNAVAILABLE, TO ANOTHER OFFICIAL ON THE FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER OR DEPUTY MINISTER LEVEL. POINTS SHOULD BE PROVIDED IN THE FORM OF A NON-PAPER AS WELL.

A. --THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION HAVE A CONTINUING INTEREST IN SUSTAINING OUR MUTUAL EFFORTS TO CONTROL THE ARMS RACE.

B. --I HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO RAISE A MATTER WHICH POTENTIALLY HAS EXTREMELY SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES AND MORE SPECIFIC BEARING ON THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION.

C. --ALTHOUGH NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE, FOR SOME TIME WE HAVE BEEN AWARE OF REPORTS OF AN EXTRAORDINARY OUTBREAK OF DISEASE WHICH CAUSED DEATHS IN SVERDLOVSK IN APRIL 1979.

D. --WE HAVE NOW RECEIVED FURTHER INFORMATION WHICH INDICATES THAT THIS EXTRAORDINARY OUTBREAK APPEARS TO INVOLVE A QUANTITY OF PULMONARY ANTHRAX AGENT EXCEEDING THAT JUSTIFIED FOR PROPHYLACTIC, PROTECTIVE, OR OTHER PEACEFUL PURPOSES AND THAT IT ORIGINATED AT A MILITARY FACILITY IN SVERDLOVSK.

E. --ARTICLE V OF THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION PROVIDES THAT THE PARTIES SHALL CONSULT AND COOPERATE WITH ONE ANOTHER IN SOLVING ANY PROBLEMS WHICH MAY ARISE. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THAT ARTICLE, I AM ASKING THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT CONSULT AND COOPERATE WITH US AND PROVIDE INFORMATION TO CLARIFY THIS OUTBREAK OF DISEASE IN SVERDLOVSK IN APRIL 1979.

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F. --WE WANT TO DEAL WITH THIS MATTER IN THE SAME SERIOUS WAY IN WHICH WE HAVE CONSULTED ON A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS INVOLVING COMPLIANCE WITH ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS IN RECENT YEARS. BECAUSE OF THE IMPLICATIONS REGARDING COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONVENTION ITSELF AND FOR OTHER ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS, WE WANTED TO RAISE THIS MATTER DIRECTLY WITH YOU AND TO ASK FOR PROMPT AND FULL CONSULTATIONS. A SIMPLE DENIAL WILL NOT SERVE OUR MUTUAL INTERESTS IN DEALING WITH THIS ISSUE.

G. SINCE WE ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF CONSULTING WITH YOU ON A COMPLIANCE RELATED QUESTION, WE INTEND TO MAKE A STATEMENT BEFORE THE REVIEW CONFERENCE CONCLUDES INDICATING THAT WE ARE PURSUING CONSULTATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE V WITH ANOTHER PARTY. ANY RESPONSE YOU CAN MAKE TO OUR REQUEST FOR CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION UNDER ARTICLE V BEFORE THE END OF THE REVIEW CONFERENCE WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN DETERMINING THE CHARACTER OF THE STATEMENT WE WILL MAKE.

H. OBVIOUSLY, UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WE WOULD NOT BE PREPARED TO APPROVE LANGUAGE IN THE FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE REVIEW CONFERENCE WHICH STATES THAT NO QUESTIONS HAVE ARISEN RELATING TO COMPLIANCE.

5. EMBASSY MOSCOW SHOULD INFORM AMBASSADOR FLOWERREE IMMEDIATELY AFTER SEEING KORNIYENKO. AMBASSADOR FLOWERREE SHOULD THEN INFORM AMBASSADOR ISSRAELIAN OF THE DEMARCHE.

6. BEGIN TEXT OF INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT (FOR INFORMATION OF AMBASSADORS):

10 MARCH 1980 - INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT OF DISEASE OUTBREAK IN SVERDLOVSK

A. THE WEAPON AND SPACE SYSTEMS INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE HAS REVIEWED ALL AVAILABLE INTELLIGENCE TO DETERMINE IF A REPORTED DISEASE OUTBREAK IN THE SOVIET UNION IN APRIL 1979 WAS ASSOCIATED WITH A BIOLOGICAL WARFARE PROGRAM AND HAS DETERMINED THE FOLLOWING:

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--AN EXTRAORDINARY OUTBREAK OF A DISEASE, PROBABLY PULMONARY ANTHRAX, OCCURRED AT SVERDLOVSK IN APRIL 1979.

--THE NUMBER OF DEATHS AND THE VIRULENCE OF THE DISEASE WERE SIGNIFICANT ENOUGH TO FORCE THE SOVIETS TO IMPOSE A QUARANTINE IN THE AREA. THE SITUATION WAS NOT BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL UNTIL LATE MAY 1979.

--THE OUTBREAK IN THE CITY WAS A RESULT OF AN ACCIDENT IN SOUTHWEST SVERDLOVSK AT THE MILITARY FACILITY THAT HAS LONG BEEN SUSPECTED OF BEING ENGAGED IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ON BIOLOGICAL WARFARE AGENTS.

--THE NATURE OF THE ACCIDENT AND THE RESULTANT NUMBER OF DISEASE VICTIMS STRONGLY INDICATE THAT THE QUANTITY OF INFECTIOUS AGENT EXCEEDS THAT REASONABLY EXPECTED TO BE REQUIRED FOR PROPHYLACTIC, PROTECTION, OR OTHER PEACEFUL PURPOSES.

--THE OFFICIAL SILENCE ON THIS INCIDENT IS IN SHARP CONTRAST TO USUAL PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS OF NATURALLY OCCURRING DISEASE EPIDEMICS IN THE USSR.

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C. WE HAVE CONSIDERED EXPLANATIONS OF THIS INCIDENT OTHER THAN THE RELEASE OF A LARGE QUANTITY OF DISEASE-PRODUCING AGENT FROM A BIOLOGICAL WARFARE FACILITY. NONE OF THESE ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING AN IMPROPERLY CONDUCTED

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VACCINE TESTING OR PRODUCTION PROGRAM, ADE-
QUATELY EXPLAINS WHAT OCCURRED. THEREFORE,
THE WEAPON AND SPACE SYSTEMS INTELLIGENCE
COMMITTEE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF STATE DEPART-
MENT, CONCLUDES THAT THERE IS A HIGH PROBAB-
ILITY THAT THE SOVIETS STILL HAVE AN ACTIVE
BIOLOGICAL WARFARE AGENT PROGRAM AT THIS
SVERDLOVSK FACILITY.

D. STATE DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THAT THE APRIL
1979 ACCIDENT PROVIDES EVIDENCE THAT
BIOLOGICAL WARFARE STOCKS WERE INVOLVED;
BUT THAT THERE IS NOT ADEQUATE EVIDENCE
TO CONCLUDE THAT THE FACILITY IS INVOLVED
IN CURRENT BIOLOGICAL WARFARE PRODUCTION.

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