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By TB NARA Date 8/1/00



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FOR THE UNDER SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR PARSONS

SUBJECT: DECISION ON FORECLOSING POSSIBLE FUTURE ABM TECHNIQUES

REF: USDEL SALT 794

1. I REFER TO ARTICLE 6 OUR DRAFT ABM AGREEMENT (REFTEL), WHICH WAS SUBMITTED IN THREE ALTERNATIVES. THIS REFLECTS ~~FIRMLY HELD DIVERGENT VIEWS OF ACDA, JCS AND OSD REPRESENTATIVES ON ISSUE WHICH IS PRECIPITATED BY SALT NEGOTIATIONS. ISSUE IS WHETHER WE SHOULD NOW ATTEMPT DEAL WITH FUTURE CONTINGENCIES SUCH AS LASER TECHNIQUES FOR ABM DEFENSE.~~
2. I AM TOLD THAT THERE HAS BEEN A DECISION AT HIGHEST LEVELS, ALBEIT NOT AS A RESULT OF NSC PROCESSES, TO FOREGO FOR ABM PURPOSES ALL FUTURE NEW TECHNOLOGY OF A NATURE DIFFERENT FROM PRESENT ABM SYSTEMS. GENERAL ALLISON, REFLECTING JCS APPEAL FOR REVIEW WHICH SHOULD REACH SECRETARY LAID IN A DAY OR SO, FEELS IT IS IMPOSSIBLE SO TO PREVENT DEVELOPMENT AND POSSIBLE APPLICATION OF NEW TECHNIQUES AT HOME AND ABROAD AND THAT IT IS IMPRUDENT TO DO SO IN AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION. PAUL NITZE'S POSITION IS A VARIANT WHICH WOULD KEEP OPEN CERTAIN TECHNIQUES FOR NON-ABM PURPOSES BUT FORECLOSE OTHERS.
3. I HAVE GREAT SYMPATHY FOR GENERAL ALLISON'S POSITION BUT AM HANDICAPPED BY LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AS TO WHAT STUDY WAS GIVEN THIS QUESTION OF POTENTIALLY VITAL IMPORTANCE TO NATIONAL SECURITY AND AS TO THE BASIS FOR THE EXISTING DECISION. IT IS TRUE THAT THESE TECHNIQUES AT PRESENT STAGE SOUND LIKE BUCK ROGERS OF A FEW YEARS AGO. NEVERTHELESS IT IS OBVIOUSLY AN ISSUE OF GREATER SIGNIFICANCE, GIVEN THE FANTASTIC PRECEDENTS OF RECENT DECADES, THAN FOR INSTANCE WAS LEAVING THE MOOT BENEFITS OF THE SST TO THE SOVIETS AND THE ANGLO-FRENCH. ALSO, GIVEN FACT APPLICATIONS ARE DEFENSIVE, THIS SUBJECT HAS QUITE DIFFERENT CONNOTATIONS FROM BIOLOGICAL WARFARE AGENTS WHICH MAY ALSO BECOME SUBJECT OF MULTILATERAL TREATY.

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