

SENSITIVE

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SITUATION(S) MESSAGE(S) LISTING

DATE 01/09/81//009

25X1

SITUATION [REDACTED]  
SUBJECT CATEGORY: IN

MESSAGE / ANNOTATION:

MESSAGE:

IMMEDIATE  
O 171808Z OCT 79 ZYH ZFF4  
FM LONDON

TO THE WHITE HOUSE

SECRET 171808Z OCT 79 PRIVACY CHANNELS

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO: WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM  
FOR: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI (EYES ONLY)  
FROM: DAVID AARON  
SUBJECT: LETTER TO THATCHER

1. BOTH JOHN HUNT AND WADE GERY EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE GRATITUDE FOR THE AFFIRMATIVE APPROACH SET FORTH IN THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO THATCHER. THEY UNDERSTOOD OUR DESIRE FOR DELAY IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND WILL WORK TO ACCOMMODATE US.

2. JOHN HUNT EXPLAINED THAT BRITISH HAD HOPED TO TAKE A CABINET DECISION ON POLARIS MODERNIZATION IN EARLY NOVEMBER WHICH THEY WOULD CONVEY TO US SHORTLY THEREAFTER BUT WITHOUT REQUESTING A RESPONSE. PRIME MINISTER THATCHER HAD PLANNED TO MAKE A FORMAL REQUEST WHEN SHE MET WITH THE PRESIDENT IN DECEMBER.

3. I EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT A DECISION TAKEN IN EARLY NOVEMBER WOULD NOT KEEP UNTIL MID-DECEMBER. MOREOVER, THE PRESIDENT WANTED TO DISCUSS THE TIMING OF A FORMAL REQUEST AND OF OUR RESPONSE WHEN HE MEETS WITH THATCHER IN DECEMBER. WHILE WE COULD NOT PRESCRIBE THE BRITISH DECISION PROCESS, I URGED THAT THEY CONSIDER DELAYING THEIR OWN DECISION AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

4. LATER, WADE GERY SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY SHOULD NOT COUNT ON MAKING A REQUEST AT THE THATCHER/CARTER MEETING BUT HE SAID THE PRIME MINISTER MIGHT NEED TO TAKE AT LEAST AN INITIAL DECISION AMONGST HER "INNER CABINET" PRIOR TO HER VISIT TO WASHINGTON. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THEY COULD STAGE-MANAGE THE INTERNAL BRITISH DECISION PROCESS UNTIL THAT TIME

\*\*\*\*\* WHSR COMMENTS \*\*\*\*\*

ZB, GATES, DENEND

NLC Review Completed.

State Dept. review completed

PSN:027181

DTG:171808

TOR:2901849

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SO AS NOT TO CREATE ANY PROBLEMS FOR TNP AND SALT,

5. I ALSO LEARNED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER IS PLANNING TO GIVE A MAJOR SPEECH ON EUROPEAN SECURITY TOMORROW IN LUXEMBOURG. IN REFERENCE TO POLARIS MODERNIZATION THE SPEECH WAS GOING TO SAY THAT THE BRITISH WILL "TAKE THE NECESSARY DECISIONS BY THE END OF THE YEAR." IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER, THEY BRITISH MODIFIED THE TEXT TO READ "WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS," AND I HAVE URGED THEM TO WATER THIS SENTENCE DOWN FURTHER. I SUGGEST OUR PRESS GUIDANCE STRESS THAT WE HAVE NO REQUEST NOR ANY TIME TABLE. WE HAVE SHARED INFORMATION SO THAT THEY CAN MAKE INTELLIGENT CHOICE. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY WILL DECIDE NOR WHEN.

6. IN SUM, I BELIEVE THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER HAD A GOOD EFFECT AND THAT THEY WILL COOPERATE WITH US TO AVOID HAVING THIS ISSUE COME TO A PEAK EITHER WITH THE ALLIES OR THE SOVIETS IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. HOWEVER, THE BRITISH HAVE SUBSTANTIAL DIFFICULTIES SHOULD THE FORMAL DECISION SLIP BEYOND FEBRUARY.

BT

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