

CONFIDENTIAL
Department of State

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 24941 311941Z
ACTION EURE-12

8047

MOSCOW 24941 311941Z

GS
GR
AN
FH

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 10-14 ADS-00 OES-09 ACDA-12 CIAE-00
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-02 DODE-00
DOE-17 SS-15 SP-02 CEQ-01 PM-06 SAS-02 PA-01
/130 W

-----088232 311955Z /47

P 311645Z OCT 79
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3586
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 24941

E.O. 12065: RDS-1 10/31/89 (WATSON, THOMAS J.) OR-M
TAGS: TECH, MNUC, UR, SF
SUBJECT: (C) SUSPECTED NUCLEAR EVENT
REF: (A) STATE 281777 (NOTAL), (B) STATE 279936 (NOTAL),

(C) MOSCOW 24869 (NOTAL), (D) STATE 284003 (NOTAL)

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SCICOUNS FOLLOWED UP DEMARCHE TO MOROZOV (REF C) ON SUSPECTED NUCLEAR EVENT IN CALL OCTOBER 31 ON MFA ACTING INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DEPARTMENT CHIEF G.S. STASHEVSKIY AND DEPUTY CHIEF B.P. PROKOF'YEV. SCICOUNS MADE PRESENTATION BASED ON SPECIFIC POINTS OF REF A AND BACKGROUND BRIEFING (REF B). SCICOUNS ALSO DREW ON HODDING CARTER STATEMENT (REF D) DENYING ACCURACY OF OCTOBER 30 TASS ARTICLE ASSERTION THAT US HAD DETECTED RADIOACTIVE DEBRIS CONFIRMING THAT NUCLEAR EXPLOSION HAD INDEED OCCURRED.

3. STASHEVSKIY DID NOT REFLECT MOROZOV'S APPARENT SKEPTICISM THAT US HAD MADE SERIOUS EFFORT TO DETERMINE WHETHER SEPTEMBER 22 EVENT WAS A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION. HE DID ASK WHETHER THE US HAD IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT OF VELA SIGNAL STARTED SEARCH FOR CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCE. HE WAS ASSURED ON THIS POINT BY EMBOFF'S READING OF SECRETARY BROWN'S ANSWER TO THIS SAME QUESTION DURING BACKGROUND BRIEFING.

4. STASHEVSKIY SAID USSR IS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT LACK OF CLARITY REGARDING SEPTEMBER 22 EVENT. HE THANKED THE US FOR INFORMATION GIVEN, SAID THAT HE HAD NOTHING TO SUBSTANTIATE US DATA. HE PROMISED TO ACQUAINT THE MFA LEADERSHIP WITH THE US VIEWS.

5. STASHEVSKIY THEN EXPLAINED THAT THE SOVIET SIDE HAD STUDIED WESTERN AND OTHER PRESS AND WIRE SERVICE REPORTS ABOUT THE SUSPECTED NUCLEAR EVENT. THE TASS REPORT ABOUT WHICH HODDING CARTER WAS ASKED WAS BASED ON SUCH REPORTS WITH INPUT FROM "INFORMED AGENCIES OF THE USSR." THE MFA DID NOT HAVE COMPETENCE TO JUDGE THE CONTENT OF TASS REPORT. HE BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT THE REFERENCE IN THE TASS REPORT TO US COLLECTION OF AIR SAMPLES CAME FROM REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO AMBASSADOR MCHENRY AT THE UN. EMBOFF POINTED OUT THAT AMBASSADOR MCHENRY HAD TRIED TO CORRECT THE IMPLICATION IN THE SPEECH OF AMBASSADOR CLARK OF NIGERIA ON OCTOBER 26 AT THE UN THAT THE EVIDENCE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION WAS CLEAR-CUT. AMBASSADOR MCHENRY WAS SURELY MISQUOTED IF SUCH A REMARK HAD BEEN ATTRIBUTED TO HIM.

6. SCICOUNS THEN REMARKED THAT AS A SCIENTIST HE WAS DISTURBED AT THE FACT THERE SEEMED TO BE NO CLEAR

EXPLANATION HOW THE RELIABLE VELA SYSTEM COULD REPORT A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION WHEN OTHER NATIONAL MEANS OF DETECTION FAILED TO YIELD ANY CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCE; HE SAID THIS MAY BE RELATED TO THE FACT THAT US AND SOVIET NATIONAL MEANS OF DETECTION ARE FOCUSSED MORE ON THE NORTHERN THAN ON THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE. STASHEVSKI EXPRESSED THE PERSONAL HOPE THAT THE US WOULD USE THIS INCIDENT TO CONVINCING THE BRITISH TO ACCEPT TEN NUCLEAR SEISMIC STATIONS ON BRITISH CONTROLLED TERRITORY, AS THE US AND USSR HAD AGREED TO DO.

7. COMMENT: MFA INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DEPT OFFICIALS AVOIDED POLEMICS. WHILE MAKING NO PROMISES, THEY PROJECTED A DESIRE TO BE HELPFUL IF THEY CAN IN DETERMINING WHAT HAPPENED ON SEPTEMBER 22. WATSON

CONFIDENTIAL