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FROM AMBASSADOR GERARD SMITH

E.O. 12065: GDS 11/29/85 (LOCKE, ALLEN)
TAGS: MNUC, PARM, SF, UR
SUBJECT: BRIEFING SOVIETS SUSPECTED NUCLEAR EVENT

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUBJECT OF SEPTEMBER 22 SUSPECTED NUCLEAR EVENT CAME UP BRIEFLY IN THE COURSE OF NOVEMBER 29 BILATERAL WITH SOVIETS IN CONNECTION WITH DISCUSSION OF SOUTH AFRICAN IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE CREDENTIALS QUESTION. SOVIET SAID (MOROZOV) SUGGESTED US HAD CONTRIBUTED TO SOUTH AFRICAN PROBLEM BY ANNOUNCING DETECTION OF SEPTEMBER 22 EVENT. SMITH NOTED THAT WE HAD NOT RPT NOT DONE SO, WHEREAS SOVIETS TWO YEARS AGO HAD ANNOUNCED THEIR DETECTION OF KALAHARI SITE. SMITH ASKED WHETHER SOVIETS HAD ANY INFORMATION TO CONFIRM NATURE OF PROVENANCE OF SEPTEMBER 22 EVENT. MOROZOV REPLIED THAT "HIS BUREAU" (STATE COMMITTEE ON NUCLEAR ENERGY) DID NOT RPT NOT; HE DID NOT RPT NOT SAY THAT HIS GOVERNMENT DID NOT RPT NOT. THE TWO SIDES AGREED THE SUBJECT COULD BE DISCUSSED FURTHER AT THE NEXT U.S. SOVIET BILATERAL, SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 5.

3. IN FURTHER EXCHANGE WITH SOVIETS, SMIT PROPOSES TO PROVIDE FURTHER U.S. INFORMATION ON THE SUBJECT, UNLESS

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DEPARTMENT PERCEIVES OBJECTIONS, HE WILL ADDRESS SUBJECT
ALONG FOLLOWING LINES AND PROBE FURTHER FOR ANY SOVIET INFORMATION:

-- OUR ONLY EVIDENCE SO FAR THAT AN EVENT TOOK PLACE IS A
SINGLE DETECTION OF AN APPARENT LIGHT SOURCE WHOSE CHARACTERISTICS
RESEMBLED THOSE OF A NUCLEAR DETONATION IN THE ATMOSPHERE.

-- WE HAVE RECEIVED NO CORROBORATION OF A SEISMIC OR OTHER NATURE.

-- NOR CAN WE NARROW THE AREA IN WHICH THE EVENT MIGHT HAVE
OCCURRED TO ONE SMALLER THAN THAT COMPRISING BROAD AREAS OF THE
SOUTH ATLANTIC AND INDIAN OCEANS AND THE LAND MASSES OF
SOUTHERN AFRICA AND ANTARCTICA.

-- WE ARE CONTINUING TO EXAMINE ALTERNATE POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS
FOR THE DETECTED PHENOMENON.

-- A PANEL OF EXPERTS UNDER WHITE HOUSE AUSPICES HAS BEEN
ENGAGED IN THIS ANALYSIS FOR SOME WEEKS, AND SHOULD COMPLETE
ITS WORK SOON.

-- WE WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT THEREAFTER.

-- WE ARE INFORMED THAT TRACES OF RADIOACTIVITY FOUND IN NEW
ZEALAND RAINWATER HAVE PROVEN NOT RPT NOT TO BE RELATED TO ANY
RECENT NUCLEAR EXPLOSION.

-- UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES WE ARE NOT RPT NOT SURE THIS WAS A
NUCLEAR EVENT NOR, OBVIOUSLY, ARE WE IN A POSITION TO POINT TO
ANY NATION FOR CONDUCTING A NUCLEAR TEST ON SEPTEMBER 22.

-- DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
BEARING ON THIS PROBLEM?

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-- IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF THE EVENT,
POSITIONS WE TAKE IN THE UN AND ELSEWHERE WILL NOT RPT NOT
BE BASED ON JUDGMENT THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAS CONDUCTED A NUCLEAR
TEST. GOMHEEN

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