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HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 26, 1984

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION  
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 148

THE U.S. UMBRELLA TALKS PROPOSAL (U)

Over the past four years, we have made numerous attempts to get the Soviet Union to join us in the serious negotiation of equal and verifiable agreements involving the significant reductions in the nuclear arsenals of both sides. To increase our prospects of success in this critical endeavor, I am convinced that we must find new ways of addressing broader strategic concepts and, on this basis, creating a firmer foundation for negotiations on the full range of specific issues involved in the process of reducing nuclear arms and increasing stability. (C)

Building upon my speech presented at the opening of the UN General Assembly, I have decided that we should pursue the proposal that our representatives meet for "Umbrella Talks" designed to provide a new forum for discussing issues of concern to both sides. For our part, we should indicate that we are prepared to begin discussions aimed at exploring mutually acceptable approaches to initiating negotiations on the limitation of the anti-satellite capabilities of both sides and the more general topic of the militarization of space, and to resuming negotiations on the reduction of offensive nuclear arsenals. We should make it equally clear that we are also prepared to discuss the nature and purpose of the US Strategic Defense Initiative and Soviet ballistic missile defense programs, and the relationship between the limitation of offensive and defensive capabilities. (S)

We should keep open the option of regularizing these talks. If held on a regular basis, the talks could complement ongoing negotiations and activity in regular diplomatic channels by providing an additional forum: to discuss issues which are not yet at the stage at which substantive negotiations could begin; to bring such issues to the point where formal, substantive negotiations could begin with some likelihood of success; and, to assist when existing formal negotiations have broken down. (C)

The Secretary of State is requested to solicit a Soviet position concerning the U.S. proposal to open "Umbrella Talks." The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs is requested to conclude promptly work already in progress and any additional work needed to support the conduct of these talks. The consideration of any further elaboration of our position in this or in related substantive areas should be addressed only after the completion of this work. (S)

Declassified/Released on 2-13-96

under provisions of E.O. 12356

J. Saunders, National Security Council

*Ronald Reagan*

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