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SCG CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

James F. Dobbins
Deputy Assistant Secretary for European
and Canadian Affairs
U.S. Department of States

NATO's Special Consultative Group has just completed its eleventh meeting this year, the fourth since the beginning of the current INF negotiating round in Geneva.

The U.S. Delegation reviewed for the SCG the current status of the INF negotiations. The German delegation briefed on the recent discussions between Foreign Ministers Genscher and Gromyko.

The SCG noted that the Soviets have yet to respond constructively to the latest U.S. initiatives announced by President Reagan on September 26. These U.S. initiatives, which are based on intensive exchanges of views with allied governments, have narrowed differences in the negotiations. All the elements for an equitable INF agreement are now on the negotiating table. The Western proposals have taken into account concerns expressed by the Soviet Union and are motivated by a spirit of compromise. If the Soviet Union is willing, we can achieve an agreement before the end of the year.

The Group discussed the October 13 communique of Warsaw Pact foreign ministers. The Eastern countries appear to share with the Allies the belief that the opportunity remains to reach an agreement in Geneva before the end of the year, and the view that, if necessary, the INF negotiations should continue beyond the end of the year. At the same time, the SCG expressed regret that Soviet statements continue to leave ambiguous the willingness of the Soviet Union to remain at the bargaining table. The position of the Allies is clear: talks should continue through the fall, and as far beyond as necessary, to reach an agreement at the earliest possible moment. The Soviet Union should remove all doubt that it adheres to this view.

Deployment of U.S. Pershing II and Ground-Launched Cruise Missiles will proceed on schedule, in the absence of concrete results in the negotiations obviating the need for deployments, as decided by the Allies in 1979; at the same time, the Allies reiterated their willingness under the terms of an INF agreement to halt, modify or reverse the planned deployment of U.S. LRINF missiles, including removal of any missiles already deployed.

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NATO remains resolved to reach an agreement that would provide for equal levels of warheads on U.S. and Soviet LRINF missiles at the lowest possible level. The Soviet Union, however, continues to seek an outcome that would preserve its substantial and threatening monopoly of SS-20 missiles, a position based on the artificial pretext that the Soviet Union should be compensated for the independent strategic forces of countries not party to the negotiations. The Soviet Union should leave this position behind it, and match in Geneva the spirit of compromise and progress with which the latest U.S. proposals were offered.

The Alliance's determination to seek an agreement reducing LRINF missile levels on both sides -- preferably to zero -- reflects its profound desire to attain stabilizing and significant reductions in nuclear weapons. The intensity and depth of the Alliance's consultative process, and the desire by all the Allies to pursue the negotiations to a successful conclusion, are a sign of that determination. The Alliance will maintain its current intensive pace of consultations, with the next SCG meeting to be held in Rome in early November.