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ITEM NO=00280633
ENVELOPE
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HEADER

R 021331Z SEP 88
FM JCS WASHINGTON DC
INFO RUEALGX/SAFE
R 021308Z SEP 88
FM CIA/OSWR
TO RUEHC/DEPT OF STATE//INR AND PASS ACDA/INTELL STAFF
RHEGLLL/USDOE LLL//Z DIV/KEEP AND PASS IETA
RHEBAAA/DOEHQ
RUEHDC/DEPT OF COMMERCE//KEEP AND PASS NBS
RUEANAT/NASA
RUEKJCS/SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
RUEKJCS/DIA
RUETIAA/DIRNSA
RUEOAYC/USAFSTC
RUCIAEA/FTD WPAFB OH//TQT/NIIS//TQFE
RUWJHTA/WHITESANDS MISSILE RANGE
RUEHFB/FBI//INTEL DIV
RUWJMRA/MAWTS ONE YUMA AZ
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CONTROLS

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SECTION 1 OF 4
CITE CIA/OSWR [REDACTED]

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/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

SUBJECT: SCIENCE AND WEAPONS REVIEW CABLE,
SW SWRC [REDACTED] 26 AUGUST 1988

X-----
USSR: ATTEMPTING TO IMPEDE WESTERN
TACTICAL LASER WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT? [REDACTED]

THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER RECENTLY DELIVERED A
SPEECH AT THE UN ON THE NEED TO PLACE LIMITS ON NEW
DEVELOPMENTS IN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS, INCLUDING
ANTIPERSONNEL LASER WEAPONS. THE SPEECH IS THE
FIRST POSITIVE SOVIET RESPONSE TO A PROPOSED BAN ON
THESE WEAPONS INITIATED IN 1986 BY SWEDEN. THE NEW

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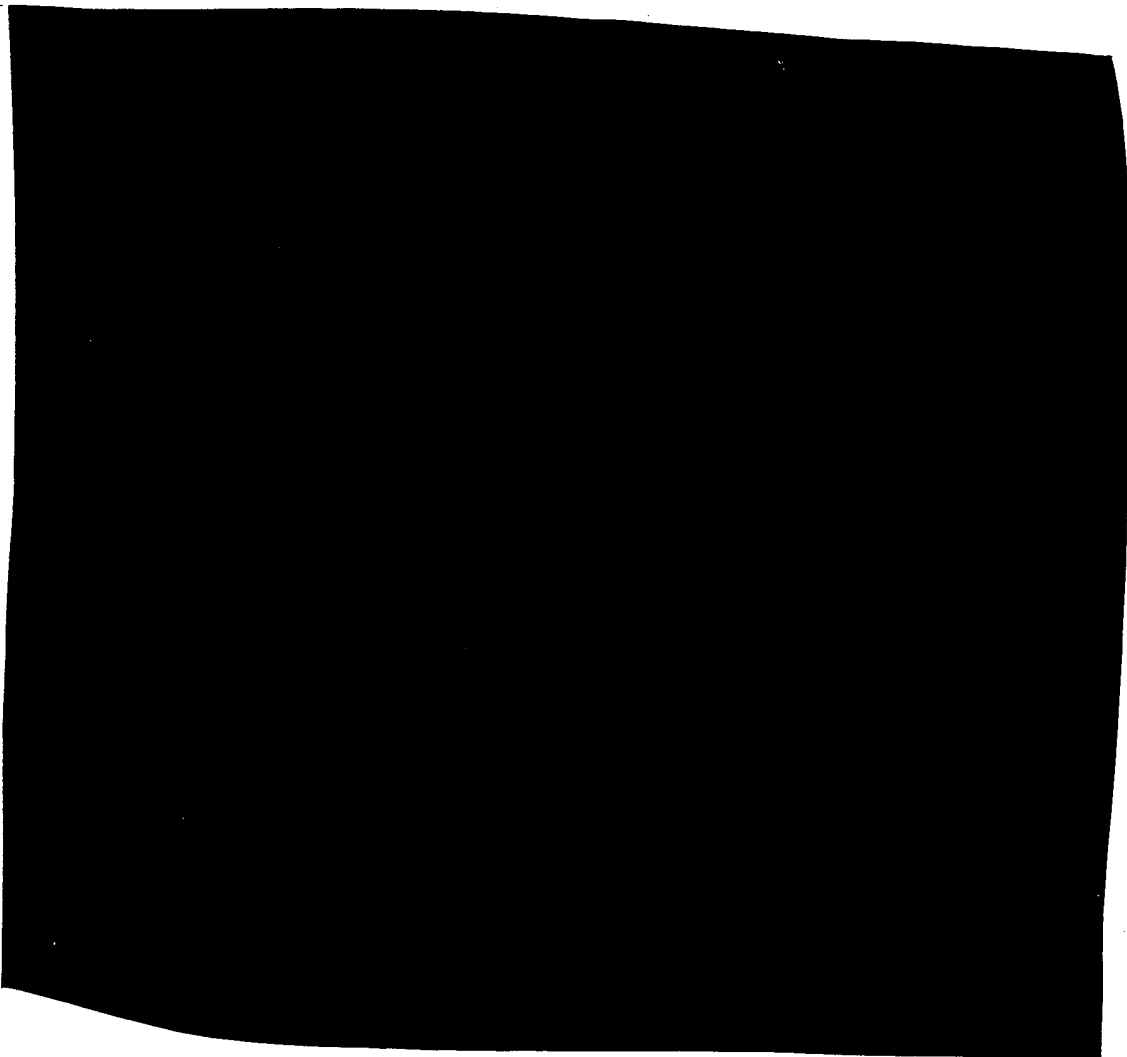
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SOVIET POSITION MAY BE INTENDED TO ASSUME THE "HIGH MORAL GROUND" ON THE ISSUE AND TO IMPEDE US PROGRESS ON DEVELOPING SUCH WEAPONS. [REDACTED]



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X-----

1. USSR: ATTEMPTING TO IMPEDE WESTERN TACTICAL LASER WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT? [REDACTED]:
RECENTLY, SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER EDWARD SHEVARDNADZE DELIVERED A SPEECH DURING THE THIRD SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT AT THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) IN NEW YORK. DURING HIS SPEECH HE REMARKED ON THE NEED TO PLACE LIMITS ON NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS. ELABORATING ON THIS POINT, SHEVARDNADZE STATED:

WORTHY OF CONSIDERATION IN THIS REGARD IS THE PROPOSAL OF STATES MEMBERS OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT ON THE CESSATION

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AND PROHIBITION OF THE USE OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENTS FOR DEVELOPING AND PRODUCING...NEW KINDS AND SYSTEMS OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS. WE REGARD AS EXTREMELY

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INTERESTING THE IDEA OF CONDUCTING A SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENTS FOR A TIMELY ELABORATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON PREVENTING THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR WEAPON DEVELOPMENT...THIS SHOULD BE DONE IN THE FIRST PLACE WITH RESPECT TO LASER, GENETIC, AND ELECTROMAGNETIC SYSTEMS. WE NOTE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL OF SWEDEN TO BAN THE USE OF BATTLEFIELD LASER WEAPONS FOR BLINDING PERSONNEL. [REDACTED]

THE SWEDES REPEATEDLY HAVE ATTEMPTED TO HAVE A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A BAN AGAINST ANTIPERSONNEL LASER WEAPONS--BASED ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS--BE APPROVED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. THEY FIRST FORMALLY PROPOSED SUCH A RESOLUTION DURING THE 25TH INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE IN GENEVA IN OCTOBER 1986 AS PART OF THE LAW ON LAND WARFARE. (THIS RESOLUTION WAS REJECTED BY THE CONFEREES AS A RESULT OF STRONG OPPOSITION FROM SEVERAL COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE USSR.) [REDACTED]

ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THROUGHOUT 1987, THE SWEDES SOUGHT

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SUPPORT FOR THIS RESOLUTION. FOR EXAMPLE:

X-- IN APRIL 1987, THE SWEDISH MISSION IN GENEVA HOSTED AN INFORMAL MULTINATIONAL MEETING TO REVIEW THEIR PROPOSAL. (THE SOVIETS WERE NOTICEABLY ABSENT AT THIS MEETING AND THE SWEDES WERE OPENLY DISAPPOINTED BY THEIR ABSENCE.)

X-- IN MAY 1987, AMBASSADOR BRITT THEORIN, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SWEDISH DELEGATION TO THE UN DISARMAMENT COMMISSION, STATED THAT SWEDEN CONSIDERED THE USE OF ANTIPERSONNEL LASER WEAPONS "A CLEAR CONTRAVENTION OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES IN THE LAW OF LAND WARFARE."

X-- IN JULY 1987, SWEDEN CIRCULATED A "REQUEST FOR VIEWS" OF THE RESOLUTION THEY WOULD PROPOSE TO THE 42ND UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN NOVEMBER 1987. [REDACTED]

COMMENT:

SHEVARDNADZE'S SPEECH IS THE FIRST POSITIVE RESPONSE BY THE

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/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 002 *****/

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SOVIETS ABOUT THE SWEDISH INITIATIVE TO BAN ANTIPERSONNEL LASER WEAPONS. UP UNTIL SHEVARDNADZE'S RECENT UN STATEMENT, THE SOVIETS AND THEIR WARSAW PACT CLIENTS HAVE BEEN SILENT OR WERE NEGATIVE ON THIS ISSUE. ALTHOUGH SHEVARDNADZE'S STATEMENT WAS NOT AN UNEQUIVOCAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE SWEDISH PROPOSAL, WE BELIEVE THAT THE STATEMENT FROM A SENIOR SOVIET DIPLOMAT WILL ENCOURAGE THE SWEDES TO CONTINUE TO SEEK AND DEVELOP INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THIS PROPOSAL. THIS DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE SOVIETS FOR TWO IMPORTANT REASONS. [REDACTED]

FIRST, UNTIL THE STATEMENT BY SHEVARDNADZE, NO MAJOR POWER HAD ENDORSED THE SWEDISH PROPOSAL. IN FACT, IN PREVIOUS PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS, BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND THE USSR HAVE BEEN UNRECEPTIVE TO THE PROPOSAL. WITH THE SOVIETS ACKNOWLEDGING THE "IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL OF SWEDEN TO BAN THE USE OF BATTLEFIELD LASER WEAPONS," THEY MAY BE ATTEMPTING TO ASSUME THE "HIGH MORAL GROUND" IN THE EYES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. [REDACTED]

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SECOND, STEADY ADVANCES BY MANY WESTERN NATIONS AND THE USSR OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS IN DEVELOPING LASER TECHNOLOGY MAKES THE FEASIBILITY OF ANTISENSOR-BATTLEFIELD-LASER WEAPONS A REALITY. THE SOVIETS, BY PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SWEDISH PROPOSAL, MAY BE ATTEMPTING TO COMPLICATE THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT FOR WESTERN MILITARY LASER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS THAT THEY PERCEIVE ARE LIKELY TO PROCEED INTO FULL-SCALE ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE. US RESEARCH AND WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE MUCH MORE ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC SCRUTINY THAN IN THE USSR. THE SOVIETS MAY HOPE THEIR RECENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SWEDISH PROPOSAL WILL SUBJECT US AND WEST EUROPEAN MILITARY LASER RESEARCH PROGRAMS TO CLOSER PUBLIC SCRUTINY AND DEBATE, WITH THE HOPE OF AT LEAST DELAYING ONSET OR SLOWING PROGRESS, IF NOT OUTRIGHT FORCING THEIR CANCELLATION. THIS TACTIC WOULD BE ESPECIALLY ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE SOVIETS BECAUSE THEIR LASER WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO PUBLIC SCRUTINY AND OPEN DEBATE AND, THUS, COULD PROCEED UNHINDERED. [REDACTED]

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