ACTION: Amembassy MOSCOW
   LONDON
INFO: USMission GENEVA
   NATO
   USUN NEW YORK

DISTO
State
SUBJECT: Signing of BW Convention

1. Amb. Dobrynin (USSR) called on Assistant Secretary DePalma in order to propose, on instructions, that biological weapons convention be signed in Moscow, during the week of March 20 to 24.

Washington and London/mbn

Dobrynin explained that UNGA resolution called for signature of BWC at early date and accordingly Sov government had proposed signature in February. However, since that had not been possible, Sov government would now like to see signature in March.

2. Dobrynin said that Sov government also proposed that the signing be accomplished at the foreign

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minister level in the presence of heads of government. DePalma asked if Soviets therefore expected Kosygin to be present at signing in Moscow and Dobrynin replied "certainly". Dobrynin explained that both seabed treaty and NPT treaty had been signed in presence of heads of government and Soviets believe there should be no appearance of downgrading of BW treaty.

3. DePalma said that US government also regarded BW treaty as of great importance and hoped that signing could be accomplished in the near future. He said that entire matter was now under consideration at high levels in the US government and we hoped to have response for the Soviets fairly soon. DePalma also commented that the US was making considerable efforts with other governments to encourage greatest possible number of signatures at opening signing and it now looked as though more than 60 countries might sign on opening day.
4. Just prior to meeting with Dobrynin, UK emboss called ACDA official to report on similar demarche that Soviets had made to British in London. UK official in London told Russians that if signing took place 20 to 24 March, Douglas would be out of town and not able to attend. However, senior foreign office minister could sign in presence of Prime Minister. According to British emboss, that signing on this basis could take place anytime on 22 March or late in the afternoon of March 23. British emboss expressed hope that US government could take this information into account.

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End.