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*Le chef de la délégation au Comité sur le désarmement
au secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*

*Head, Delegation to Disarmament Committee,
to Secretary of State for External Affairs*

TELEGRAM 192

Geneva, March 13, 1962

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TALK WITH LORD HOME

I had an hour talk with Lord Home at his request shortly after I arrived. I found him hopeful about the prospects of the conference on disarmament mainly because of the degree to which USA Government was willing to take a constructive initiative which he feels the Russians will find difficult to reject. USA and UK, he said, were in close agreement both on disarmament and on nuclear tests.

2. USA were contemplating an offer (which they stress should be kept a close secret until they put it forward), of a 30 percent across the board reduction in weapons including nuclear carriers accompanied by sample inspection. Home described this USA initiative as nothing short of "spectacular." The important point in his judgment about this offer would be that it proposed in the first stage of the amended USA plan that there should be a substantial destruction of arms.

3. On nuclear tests, Home said, contrary to press reports there was complete agreement between UK and USA. They were agreed that it was not repeat not sufficient to rely on national detection systems to check the observance of a nuclear test ban treaty. They were also agreed that unless scientists can say that a national system of detection can detect the location as well as the fact of test explosions it would not repeat not be possible to accept national detection systems tests in the upper atmosphere and under the ground. UK was perhaps more inclined to think that scientists could come up with a positive answer than USA was. Home, however, was trying to explore with Gromyko how much leeway his instructions would permit in admitting international inspection teams into Russia.

4. Home stressed, however, that disagreement with the Russians over nuclear tests would not repeat not inhibit or be allowed to prejudice discussions on general and complete disarmament, especially in view of USA's expected initiative referred to above.

5. Home described his talks with Gromyko over Berlin as "rather tough." Home had told Gromyko that Soviet scattering of chaff to interfere with radar and air traffic control in the air corridors was "very nearly an act of war" and extremely dangerous. Gromyko professed ignorance about these incidents but was clearly embarrassed according to Home. Home suggested to Gromyko that he might check with the military authorities in Moscow as the allies had clear evidence as to the source of this interference and could give facts about Soviet bombers used for this activity. Home stressed that USA and UK governments took the most serious view of this kind of pressure on civilian airline traffic and it was only the reduction and virtual abandonment on this activity in the corridors today that had prevented their recommending to their governments reconsideration of the opening of the Disarmament Conference. I made the comment that postponement or interference with conference arrangements might put the West in the wrong since so many public expectations are based