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in DEF 15 IND-USSR
Department of State **TELEGRAM**
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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 EUR-20 SS-14 PH-06 T-03 DODE-00 CIAE-00

INR-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 NSC-10 GAC-01 OMB-01 PRS-01

USIA-12 P-03 *RSR-01* /104 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8886
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
CINCPAC
CINCPACREP CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 2740

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: SOVIET RATIONALE FOR NAVAL PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN

REF: COLOMBO 1457

1. AUSTRALIAN CONCERN OVER GROWING SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN NOT LIKELY TO BE RELIEVED BY RATIONALE REPORTEDLY GIVEN BY SOVIET PACIFIC FLEET COMMANDER, ADMIRAL SMIRNOV, DURING RECENT VISIT TO CEYLON (REFTL). AS DEPT HAS STATED, PERMANENT U.S. NAVAL PRESENCE LIMITED BY MIDEASTFOR, WHICH IS SYMBOLIC PRESENCE IN NO WAY COMPARABLE TO NUMBER AND TYPES OF SOVIET NAVAL VESSELS IN INDIAN OCEAN IN LAST TWO OR THREE YEARS. MOREOVER, IF SOVIET CONCERN IS REALLY U.S. SUBMARINES, SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE NOT PRIMARILY ANTI-SUBMARINE FORCE AND NOT OF SUFFICIENT SIZE TO HAVE MUCH ASW CAPABILITY.

2. EMBASSY TRUSTS THAT ANY U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO SUGGESTION BY RATNAVALE (PARA 3 REFTL) WILL EMPHASIZE TYPES AND NUMBERS OF SOVIET SHIPS IN INDIAN OCEAN, RATHER THAN PLAY DOWN U.S. NAVAL PRESENCE.

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