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~~ACTION~~ 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} ~~in~~ high levels in the US government and we hoped to have ~~XXXX~~ 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.

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E.O. 12958, as amended
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4. Just prior to meeting with Dobrynin, UK emboff called ACDA official to report on ~~xxxx~~ 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 ~~Home~~ Home would be out of town and not able to attend. However, senior foreign office minister could sign in presence of Prime Minister. Foreign office has just ^{ascertained,} ~~ascertained,~~ according to British emboff, that signing on this basis could take place anytime on 22 March or late in the afternoon of March 23. British emboff expressed hope that US government could take this information into account.

GP-3

End.

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