

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FM MOSCOW 032150Z JUL 84

TO IMMEDIATE FCO (DESKBY 040800Z)

TELEGRAM NR 827 OF 03 JUL 84

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, BONN, PARIS, UKDEL NATO, MODUK.

SAVINGS TO UKMIS NEW YORK, UKDIS GENEVA, UKDEL VIENNA, UKDEL CSCE STOCKHOLM, ANKARA, ATHENS, BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN, LISBON, LUXEMBOURG, MADRID, OSLO, OTTAWA, REYKJAVIK, ROME, THE HAGUE, BELGRADE, BUCHAREST, BUDAPEST, EAST BERLIN, PRAGUE, SOFIA, WARSAW, TOKYO, PEKING, ULAN BATOR.

YOUR VISIT TO MOSCOW: 1-3 JULY: GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

SUMMARY

1. THE FIRST VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION SINCE 1977 BY A BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY IN HIS OWN RIGHT WAS HARD POUNDING. ON THE UNITED STATES AND ARMS CONTROL, CHERMENKO AND GROMYKO WERE AT THEIR MOST UNYIELDING. IN PARTICULAR THE US RESPONSE TO THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR TALKS ON WEAPONS IN SPACE WAS DISMISSED, SEEMINGLY BY REFLEX ACTION RATHER THAN ON RATIONAL CALCULATION. THERE COULD BE NO BREAKTHROUGH: AND THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT YOUR INSISTENT URGING THAT THE RUSSIANS SHOULD TEST WESTERN SINCERITY IN NEGOTIATION HAD STRUCK HOME. BUT NO HIGH-LEVEL WESTERN VISITOR HAS THIS YEAR MORE EFFECTIVELY SHOWN UP THE FALLACIES AND WILFUL PERVERSITY OF THE SOVIET POSITION. DESPITE THE BLUNTNES OF YOUR EXCHANGES, IT WAS ONLY AT GROMYKO'S LUNCH THAT THE ATMOSPHERE WAS SCURED. THERE WERE FEW DIRECT ATTACKS ON BRITAIN, AND A SOVIET CONTACT HAS ALREADY SPOKEN RESPECTFULLY OF YOUR STYLE. MORE OR LESS WHAT HAD BEEN EXPECTED: BUT USEFUL FOR US, SALUTARY FOR THEM, WITH POSSIBLE LONG-TERM DIVIDENDS.

DETAIL

2. THE OMENS FOR YOUR VISIT WERE NOT GOOD. CHANCE MADE YOU THE LAST IN LINE OF A SERIES OF WESTERN EUROPEAN STATESMAN IN MOSCOW THIS YEAR (VOGEL, ANDREOTTI, GENSCHER AND, IMMEDIATELY BEFOREHAND, MITTERRAND). AS WE ALL WAIT FOR THE AMERICAN ELECTIONS, AND SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY IS DEEP IN A RUT OF ITS OWN MAKING, THERE WAS NO PROSPECT THAT CHERMENKO AND GROMYKO COULD BE SHIFTED FROM THE LINE OF UNCOMPROMISING HOSTILITY TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES. AND SO IT PROVED. FIVE HOURS OF FORMAL TALKS WITH GROMYKO, ROUNDED OFF BY OVER AN HOUR WITH CHERMENKO, SHOWED NOT EVEN A HAIRLINE CRACK IN THEIR ARMOUR OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.

CONFIDENTIAL

NEITHER

## CONFIDENTIAL

3. NEITHER WAS PREPARED TO GRANT THE LEAST HINT OF SINCERITY TO THE US GOVERNMENT IN ANY ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE EAST/WEST RELATIONS. ON THE CONTRARY, THE LEITMOTIF IN ALL THAT THEY SAID ON ALL INTERNATIONAL TOPICS REMAINED THEIR OBSESSION THAT THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION IS DRIVEN BY AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS TOWARDS THE SOVIET PEOPLE AND THEIR WAY OF LIFE. THIS EMERGED AT ITS HARSHTEST IN GROMYKO'S LUNCHTIME SPEECH ON 2 JULY, AND IN HIS CLAIM THAT THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP HAD CONCLUDED ON THE DAY THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION TOOK OFFICE, THAT THEY COULD NOT DO BUSINESS WITH IT. IT LEFT NO ROOM FOR ANY ILLUSION ENGENDERED BY MITTERRAND'S VISIT THAT A CHANGE IN SOVIET ATTITUDE MIGHT BE IN THE WIND.
4. THE CENTRAL PLACE IN YOUR EXCHANGES WAS OCCUPIED BY ARMS CONTROL AND IN PARTICULAR ON ARMS IN SPACE. THESE WERE GIVEN TOPICAL POINT ON THE EVE OF YOUR TALKS BY THE FLURRY OF SOVIET PROPOSAL AND AMERICAN COUNTER-PROPOSAL, CONCERNING THE POSSIBILITY OF TALKS IN SEPTEMBER. NOTHING COULD BETTER HAVE ILLUSTRATED THE PRESENT SOVIET DETERMINATION NOT TO BE DRAWN INTO RENEWED NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES ON ARMS CONTROL THAN THEIR INSTANT DISMISSAL OF REAGAN'S AGREEMENT TO DISCUSS ARMS IN SPACE, AND RENEWED DECLARATION OF HIS WISH TO RESUME DISCUSSION ON BOTH INTERMEDIATE AND STRATEGIC NUCLEAR SYSTEMS. THIS PLAINLY CAUGHT THE RUSSIANS OFF-BALANCE AND LEFT THEM IN THE POSITION OF REFUSING TO ACCEPT YES FOR AN ANSWER TO THEIR OWN PROPOSAL. EVEN THE ORDINARILY IMPASSIVE GROMYKO LOOKED UNCOMFORTABLE AS YOU REPEATEDLY STATED THE ILLOGICALITY. CHERNENKO WAS UNBRIEFED AND PROBABLY ALSO UNCOMPREHENDING, BUT EVIDENTLY READY TO FOLLOW GROMYKO'S ADVICE.
5. THE FACT THAT BRITAIN WAS RARELY A DIRECT TARGET IN GROMYKO'S FIRING LINE WAS NOT A FAVOUR TO YOU. THIS WAS ANOTHER FACET OF THE REAGAN FIXATION WHICH LEADS THE RUSSIANS TO JUDGE US LESS ON OUR MERITS THAN ON OUR CAPACITY TO SERVE AS A CONDUIT TO WASHINGTON. GROMYKO'S EIGHTY-MINUTE MONOLOGUE AT THE FIRST ROUND - WAS ADDRESSED TO REAGAN AND SHULTZ. THIS AND HIS SUBSEQUENT FAILURE TO MEET HEAD-ON THE POINTS WHICH YOU PUT TO HIM ALSO SHOWED THE EXTENT TO WHICH HE HAD LOST, OR DELIBERATELY ABANDONED, THE ART OF GENUINE NEGOTIATION AND DISCUSSION WITH WESTERN INTERLOCUTORS. THIS IMPRESSION WAS REINFORCED BY HIS REFUSAL TO RISE TO YOUR REMARKS EITHER ON HUMAN RIGHTS CASES IN THE SOVIET UNION (THOUGH AT THIS POINT HE FLUSHED ANGRILY) OR AFGHANISTAN.
6. THE PARADOX OF THE VISIT WAS THAT IT WILL SIMULTANEOUSLY HAVE CONFIRMED SOVIET PREJUDICES ABOUT OUR SITTING IN THE AMERICAN POCKET: AND HAVE RAISED YOUR STATURE WITH GROMYKO AS AN INDEPENDENT ACTOR. THE RUSSIANS WILL HAVE NOTED WRYLY YOUR ABILITY TO CITE DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE WHITE HOUSE IN SUPPORT OF YOUR CONTENTION THAT THE US WILL TALK TO THE SOVIET UNION WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS ON WEAPONS IN SPACE. BUT THERE IS ALSO EVIDENCE THAT BY THE CLOSING STAGES OF

## CONFIDENTIAL

THE VISIT, YOU MAY HAVE STARTED TO SCORE TOO MANY POINTS FOR COMFORT. SHORTLY BEFORE YOUR PRESS CONFERENCE, THE FIRST DEPUTY HEAD OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S PRESS DEPARTMENT, WHO HAD BEEN PRESENT THROUGHOUT THE TALKS, GAVE A BRIEFING AT SHORT NOTICE TO BRITISH CORRESPONDENTS. THIS LOOKED LIKE AN ATTEMPT TO PRE-EMPT WHAT THE RUSSIANS RIGHTLY ANTICIPATED WOULD BE AN EFFECTIVE PRESS CONFERENCE. A TASS CONTACT, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE FRANKNESS OF THE TALKS, ADMIRERD YOUR STYLE.

7. SO MUCH FOR THE PLAY: WHAT OF THE SOVIET PLAYERS ?  
CHERNENKO LISTENED ATTENTIVELY TO WHAT YOU HAD TO SAY. WALKING TO GREET YOU AND RISING TO SAY GOODBYE, HE SHOWED NO VISIBLE INFIRMITY. HE WAS LESS BREATHLESS IN DELIVERY THAN AT THE MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AFTER ANDROPOV'S FUNERAL. BUT, WITH A PASTY PALLOR, HE LOOKED GENERALLY LESS HEALTHY AND READ FROM HIS PREPARED TEXT WITHOUT THE FOCUS OF EVIDENT CONVICTION. BUT HIS SUBSEQUENT APOLOGY FOR SOME OF HIS PHRASES (IN PARTICULAR THE REFERENCE TO UNCLE SAM'S PISTOL POINTED AT THE SOVIET UNION) WAS EQUALLY UNCONVINCING. LEFT ON HIS OWN AFTER GROMYKO HAD SOUGHT TO RESCUE HIM FROM CONFUSION ON ARMS IN SPACE, HE RESORTED TO THE LANGUAGE OF EMOTIONAL PROPAGANDA ABOUT AMERICAN ROCKETS IN EUROPE. IT WAS NOT THE PERFORMANCE OF AN AUTOMATON, BUT IT WAS PRETTY INEPT AND CONFIRMED THE IMPRESSION THAT, AT LEAST ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, THE CENTRAL FIGURE IN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP LACKS AUTHORITY AND SOPHISTICATED OF THOUGHT.

8. GROMYKO REMAINS AN ADROIT PERFORMER, SPEAKING AT LENGTH AND WITHOUT NOTES. HIS COMMAND OF HIS SUBJECT MATTER, AND CAPACITY FOR DETAIL, IS STILL IMPRESSIVE. THE STRENGTH OF HIS POSITION IN THE FORMULATION OF SOVIET POLICY ON THE QUESTIONS OF CENTRAL INTEREST TO US CAN ON THE EVIDENCE OF THE LAST TWO DAYS HARDLY BE DENIED. BUT HIS AGE IS BEGINNING TO SHOW IN THE TRICK OF RECALLING THE DISTANT PAST, AND IN HIS IMPERVIOUSNESS TO NEW IDEAS. AS HE INSISTENTLY PLAYED HIS ANTI-AMERICAN GRAMOPHONE RECORD, IT SOUNDED MORE AND MORE LIKE THE WELL-WORN 78 IT NOW IS.

9. THE IMPACT OF ANY SINGLE VISIT IS HARD TO MEASURE, EVEN IN MORE IMPRESSIONABLE CAPITALS THAN MOSCOW. THERE WERE DISAPPOINTMENTS IN YOUR PROGRAMME, SUCH AS THE REFUSAL (NOT UNEXPECTED) OF YOUR REQUEST FOR A CALL ON GORBACHEV, AND THE RELATIVELY SPARSE ATTENDANCE AT THE INFORMAL LUNCH I GAVE ON 3 JULY. BUT, EXPLOITING YOUR POSITION AS THE LAST OF A SERIES OF SENIOR WESTERN VISITORS, YOU WERE ABLE THE MORE TELLINGLY TO DEMONSTRATE, BY PATIENT ARGUMENT, THAT THE SOVIET PICTURE OF WESTERN, AND ESPECIALLY AMERICAN, POLICIES AND INTENTIONS IN NO WAY ACCORDS WITH REALITY. EQUALLY, IT WAS SALUTARY TO DEMONSTRATE THAT SOVIET HOPES OF HAVING PROVOKED A SPLIT IN WESTERN POSITIONS ARE UNFOUNDED. I CANNOT HONESTLY SAY THAT THIS MADE AN IMPRESSION ON EITHER

-3-  
CONFIDENTIAL

/GROMYKO,

CONFIDENTIAL

GROMYKO OR CHERNENKO. BUT WE HAVE NEVER EXPECTED THAT IMPROVEMENT IN THE CLIMATE OF EAST/WEST RELATIONS AND THE CONSEQUENT EASING OF THE PRESENT DANGEROUS LEVELS OF TENSION AND MUTUAL RECRIMINATION COULD BE ANYTHING BUT A LONG UPHILL STRUGGLE. YOU WILL HAVE YOUR OWN VIEW, BUT MEASURED BY THAT YARDSTICK, I THINK YOU CAN BE WELL CONTENT WITH THE OUTCOME. I AM CERTAINLY GRATEFUL TO YOU, AS ALSO TO LADY HOWE - WHOSE OWN PROGRAMME WAS A WORTHWHILE INPUT IN ITS OWN RIGHT - FOR HAVING COME.

10. FCO PLEASE PASS SAVINGS ADDRESSEES.

SUTHERLAND  
BT

FCO / WH (PALACE)  
SOV. D.

REPEATED AS REQUESTED

4  
CONFIDENTIAL