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TO IMMEDIATE MOSCOW

TELEGRAM NUMBER 893 OF 15 OCTOBER

INFO WASHINGTON, BONN, PARIS, UKDEL NATO

MIPT: SOVIET AMBASSADOR'S CALL 15 OCTOBER: UK/SOVIET RELATIONS

1. FOLLOWING HIS DEMARCHE ON JAPAN, POPOV RAISED UK/SOVIET RELATIONS.

2. POPOV REFERRED TO GROMYKO'S CHARACTERISATION OF UK/SOVIET BILATERAL RELATIONS AS 'SATISFACTORY' IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF US MISSILES IN BRITAIN. THE SOVIET UNION SOUGHT MORE ACTIVE COOPERATION WITH THE UK. POPOV REFERRED TO THE NPT AND ANTARCTICA AS SPECIFIC EXAMPLES. BUT BRITISH SUPPORT FOR THE US POSITION ON THE MILITARISATION OF OUTER SPACE WAS A NEGATIVE FACTOR. THE US CLEARLY DID NOT WANT TALKS ABOUT THIS.

3. THERE WAS SCOPE FOR A FURTHER INCREASE IN UK/SOVIET TRADE, NOTWITHSTANDING THAT ALREADY RECORDED IN 1983. THERE WERE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FIELDS OF CHEMICALS, PETROCHEMICALS, MACHINE TOOLS AND FOOD PROCESSING. THE SOVIET SIDE HOPED THAT ITS PRESENCE AT FARNBOROUGH THIS YEAR COULD LEAD TO POSITIVE RESULTS. CULTURAL COOPERATION WAS NOT ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY. OTHER COUNTRIES HAD ACCEPTED VISITS FROM MAJOR SOVIET GROUPS. POPOV MENTIONED THE BOLSHOI BALLET AND THE MOSCOW ARTS THEATRE. IF THESE GROUPS VISITED THE UK THERE COULD BE AN OVERALL BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

4. POPOV REFERRED TO CHRRNENKO'S DISCUSSION OF BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER IN FEBRUARY. THE SOVIET COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING RELATIONS WAS SERIOUS, NOT JUST WORDS. HE WAS AUTHORISED TO SAY THAT MR GORBACHEV HAD ACCEPTED THE INVITATION TO VISIT THE UK IN DECEMBER AT THE HEAD OF A DELEGATION FROM THE SUPREME SOVIET. THE VISIT COULD START ON 15,16 OR 17 DECEMBER. GORBACHEV LOOKED FORWARD TO MEETING MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND SENIOR POLITICAL FIGURES INCLUDING THE PRIME MINISTER. POPOV SAID THAT HE WOULD BE INFORMING

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LEADERS OF PARLIAMENT ABOUT THIS VERY SOON.

5. I AGREED WITH POPOV THAT THERE WAS ROOM FOR EXPANSION IN BILATERAL TRADE. WE LOOKED FOR INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SOVIET MARKET. THE BALANCE WAS STILL IN FAVOUR OF THE SOVIET UNION. WE LOOKED FOR A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CULTURAL RELATIONS FLOWING FROM THE NEGOTIATIONS ON A NEW CULTURAL AGREEMENT TO BE HELD IN MOSCOW IN JANUARY.
6. WE WERE GLAD THAT MR GORBACHEV COULD VISIT LONDON IN DECEMBER POPOV WOULD HAVE NOTED THE POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE MENTION IN MY SPEECH IN BRIGHTON THAT MR GROMYKO WOULD BE VISITING BRITAIN NEXT YEAR. (POPOV SAID HE HAD NOTED AND REPORTED THIS). POPOV WAS UNAWARE THAT ANY PRECISE DATES HAD BEEN DISCUSSED. I SAID THAT PRECISE DATES HAD NOT BEEN FIXED BUT THAT MR GROMYKO APPEARED TO THINK THAT THE SECOND HALF OF MAY WAS ABOUT THE RIGHT TIME. DETAILED PROPOSALS WOULD BE MADE IN DUE COURSE.
7. I THEN TOOK POPOV THROUGH THE SAME LIST OF BILATERAL VISITS AND CONSULTATIONS AS YOU HAD DONE WITH RYZHOV (YOUR TELNO 1163). POPOV AGREED TO DO WHAT HE COULD TO ASSIST THESE.
8. AT THE END OF THIS PART OF OUR CONVERSATION I TOLD POPOV THAT I HOPED THAT THE SAME SORT OF ACCESS TO SOVIET MINISTERS WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO YOU AS POPOV ENJOYED HERE. POPOV SAID HE HAD NOTED THE POINT.
9. COMMENT. THE INFORMATION ABOUT GORBACHEV'S VISIT SHOULD, AT THIS STAGE, BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL. IT WILL BE FOR THE IPU TOGETHER WITH THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO NEGOTIATE THE TIMING AND TERMS OF ANY PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT. WE WILL INFORM YOU AND OTHERS CONCERNED AS SOON AS THIS HAS BEEN AGREED.
10. SEE MIFT FOR US/SOVIET RELATIONS.
11. NEWS DEPARTMENT HAVE TAKEN THE LINE THAT THE CALL LASTED FOR 45 MINUTES AND THAT VARIOUS ASPECTS OF EAST/WEST RELATIONS WERE DISCUSSED INCLUDING MR GROMYKO'S RECENT VISIT TO THE US.

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