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FROM MOSCOW 101455Z DECEMBER  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1405 OF 10 DECEMBER  
INFO IMMEDIATE DTI  
INFO SAVING UKDEL NATO, WASHINGTON, BONN AND PARIS

GORBACHEV'S VISIT.

1. AS MY DISCUSSION LAST WEEK WITH GORBACHEV MADE CLEAR (MY TELNO 1382), HE AND THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP GENERALLY ARE TAKING VERY SERIOUSLY THIS FIRST MAJOR VISIT TO THE UK FOR NEARLY A DECADE. WE SHALL PROBABLY NEVER KNOW WHETHER ITS GOOD TIMING, SHORTLY BEFORE GROMYKO AND SHULTZ ARE TO MEET IN A RENEWED EFFORT TO IMPROVE EAST/WEST RELATIONS, IS PURELY FORTUITOUS, OR WHETHER THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP HAD ALREADY MAPPED OUT THEIR COURSE AS FAR BACK AS OCTOBER, WHEN GORBACHEV ACCEPTED THE INVITATION. THE FACT REMAINS THAT THIS IS A PROPITIOUS MOMENT TO MAKE AN INPUT IN THE WESTERN CAUSE, OTHER THAN THROUGH THE TRADITIONAL CHANNEL OF GROMYKO.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER MINISTERS RECEIVING GORBACHEV WILL FIND HIM MORE OPEN IN MANNER THAN THE TRADITIONALLY STONY-FACED SOVIET LEADERSHIP AND HIS YOUTH AND VIGOUR MAKE A REFERESHING CHANGE FROM THE AGEING AND SICK FIGURES OF RECENT YEARS. BUT IT IS ESSENTIAL TO KEEP IN MIND THAT HE IS, NO LESS THAN THEY, A PRODUCT OF THE PARTY MACHINE AND IT WOULD BE WRONG TO IMAGINE THAT HE WANTS TO CHANGE THE SOVIET STRUCTURE RATHER THAN TO OPERATE IT MORE EFFICIENTLY.

3. THE FORMAL OCCASION FOR THE VISIT - THE PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGES - SHOULD HOWEVER HAVE AN APPEAL FOR GORBACHEV AS A MAN WITH LEGAL TRAINING (AND INCIDENTALLY THE FIRST POST-WAR MEMBER OF THE POLITBURO TO HAVE ATTENDED UNIVERSITY) AND ONE WHO HAS EVINCED AN INTEREST IN THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT. HIS AIDES IN THE PARTY APPARATUS WILL HAVE BRIEFED HIM TO PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO HIS MEETINGS WITH THE OPPOSITION LEADERS. BUT HIS PRIORITIES WILL BE A THOROUGH AND WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION ON EAST WEST RELATIONS WITH BRITISH MINISTERS AND A GLIMPSE OF OUR AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL CAPABILITIES. ON EAST/WEST RELATIONS, HE WILL SEE US AS A NUCLEAR POWER CLOSE TO THE UNITED STATES AND PROBABLY MORE INFLUENTIAL WITH THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION THAN OTHERS, AND WILL LOOK FOR INSIGHTS INTO AMERICAN INTENTIONS AND SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE. OUR MESSAGE TO HIM SHOULD BE THAT THE WEST UNQUESTIONABLY WANTS BETTER RELATIONS, BUT NOT ANY ANY PRICE. THE WORLD IS NOT, AS SOVIET PROPAGANDA FREQUENTLY MAINTAINS, ON THE BRINK OF NUCLEAR CATASTROPHE. BUT WE DO ALL SPEND MORE ON ARMS THAN WE CAN READILY AFFORD AND SHOULD RATIONALLY PUT OUR RESOURCES TO BETTER USE. GEOGRAPHY MAY CREATE NUANCES BETWEEN AMERICAN POSITIONS AND THOSE OF THE EUROPEAN POWERS, BUT THERE IS SOLIDARITY IN ALL THE ESSENTIALS. ALTHOUGH IT NATURALLY FALLS TO THE AMERICANS, AS A SUPER-POWER, TO TAKE THE MAIN WEIGHT OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE RUSSIANS, THEY REPRESENT A COLLECTIVE WESTERN INTEREST. IN ADDITION, WE SHALL BE READY TO PLAY OUR PART AS THE SITUATION DEMANDS.

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NONE OF US LOOKS FOR A SPECTACULAR BREAKTHROUGH, BUT RATHER FOR STEADY PROGRESS OVER THE LONGER TERM IN FINDING WAYS IN WHICH TWO FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS CAN LIVE TOGETHER WITHOUT FRICTION.

4. ALTHOUGH IT IS THE SUPER-POWER RELATIONSHIP WHICH MONOPOLISES SOVIET ATTENTION, IT WILL ALSO BE USEFUL TO DISCUSS WITH HIM REGIONAL ISSUES ESPECIALLY THE MIDDLE EAST AND TO UNDERLINE THAT, IN THESE TOO, THE WEST SEEKS TO ELIMINATE SOURCES OF CONFRONTATION.

5. ON THE ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL FRONT, WE SHOULD AIM TO DEMONSTRATE THAT, DESPITE PROBLEMS OF ADJUSTMENT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND A WORLD IN WHICH THE GEOGRAPHICAL BALANCE OF INDUSTRIAL POWER IS RAPIDLY EVOLVING, THERE IS MUCH WE HAVE TO OFFER THE SOVIET UNION :

(I) IN AGRICULTURE, WE SHOULD DRUM IN OUR OVERWHELMING COMPARATIVE EFFICIENCY (USING ONLY 3 PERCENT OF OUR WORKING POPULATION, ON A TOTAL ARABLE LAND AREA ONLY ONE FIFTIETH OF THE USSR, WE PRODUCE TWO-THIRDS OF ALL THE FOOD REQUIREMENTS OF A BETTER-FED POPULATION). THE RUSSIANS WOULD DO BETTER TO INVEST IN THE ACQUISITION OF OUR AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY (PLANT AND LIVESTOCK BREEDING, PEST AND DISEASE CONTROL, WATER AND LAND MANAGEMENT), THAN TO GO ON SPENDING BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN MAKING GOOD RECURRING GRAIN DEFICITS :

(II) INDUSTRIALLY, WE ARE PROVEN SUPPLIERS OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, ABOVE ALL IN CHEMICAL ENGINEERING (SEE MY IFT NOT TO ALL).

AS THE SOVIET UNION GEARS UP TO THE NEXT FIVE YEAR PLAN, IT WOULD DO WELL TO LOOK TO US. THE PRESENCE ON THE SUPREMEFSOVIET DELEGATION OF KOMAROV, EFFECTIVELY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE, GIVES THE COMMERCIAL COMPONENT IN THE PROGRAMME PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE.

6. MY SECOND IFT (ALSO NOT TO ALL) CONTAINS SUGGESTIONS FOR BILATERAL QUESTIONS ON WHICH WE SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF GORBACHEV'S VISIT AND THE CURRENT ATMOSPHERE OF RELATIVE GOODWILL.

7. FCO ADVANCE TO PRIVATE SECRETARY (NO.10), AND PRIVATE SECRETARIES TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND AND THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD, AND IN DTI TO PS MINISTER FOR TRADE, ROBERTS, CORLEY AND GEORGE OT4.

FCO PLEASE ALSO PASS TO SAVING ADDRESSEES.

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