

GRS 270  
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FM WASHINGTON  
TO PRIORITY F C O  
TELNO 538  
OF 062100Z MARCH 86  
INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW

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TIMING OF US/SOVIET SUMMIT

SUMMARY

1. PRESS REPORTS OF US IMPATIENCE AT SOVIET DELAY IN AGREEING A SUMMIT DATE ARE EXAGGERATED.

DETAIL

2. PRESIDENT REAGAN WAS PRESSED BY JOURNALISTS ON 5 MARCH ON THE TIMING OF THE NEXT SUMMIT. ONE OF HIS REPLIES WAS THAT IF A 1986 SUMMIT DID NOT TAKE PLACE QUOTE THERE WON'T BE A 1987 SUMMIT IN MOSCOW UNQUOTE. THIS HAS BEEN PLAYED UP IN THE PRESS HERE AS EVIDENCE OF THE PRESIDENT'S GROWING IMPATIENCE WITH THE SOVIET FAILURE TO FIRM UP THE DATES FOR A SUMMIT THIS YEAR.

3. LATER IN THE DAY THE WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN MADE PLAIN THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE IN THE POSITION. THE US HAD OFFERED A MEETING IN WASHINGTON IN JUNE OR JULY. THEY WERE STILL IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RUSSIANS AND NO FORMAL REPLY HAD BEEN RECEIVED. THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS MEANT SIMPLY THAT THE NEXT SUMMIT WOULD TAKE PLACE IN WASHINGTON: IF NOT IN 1986, THEN IN 1987.

4. OUR CONTACTS IN STATE CONFIRM THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO RECENT NEWS FROM THE RUSSIANS ON DATES. WITH THE PARTY CONGRESS OUT OF THE WAY, THEY ARE EXPECTING TO HEAR SOMETHING NEXT WEEK.

COMMENT

5. IF THE SILENCE LASTS MUCH LONGER THAN THAT, WE WOULD EXPECT THE LEVEL OF ADMINISTRATION FRUSTRATION, STILL LOW AT PRESENT, TO BEGIN TO RISE. THE WHITE HOUSE, NSC AND STATE DEPARTMENT STILL HOPE FOR A SUMMIT HERE BEFORE END-JULY, BUT THE TERMS OF THE PRESIDENT'S REPLY TO GORBACHEV ON INF SHOW THAT THERE IS STILL NO QUESTION OF WILLINGNESS TO PAY A PRICE FOR IT, BY SUCCUMBING TO SOVIET PRESSURE FOR ADVANCE CONCESSIONS.

WRIGHT

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