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US/SOVIET RELATIONS: GORBACHEV'S APPROACH MARCH TO A SUMMIT

SUMMARY

1. WITH A SUMMIT NOW A 'REAL PROSPECT' (SHEVARDNADZE'S UNGA SPEECH), ASSUMING THAT A DANILOFF DEAL IS MADE, GORBACHEV CAN LOOK FORWARD TO PRODUCING MORE SUBSTANTIAL RESULTS FROM IT THAN HE ACHIEVED AT GENEVA AND THAN HE HIMSELF HAS SINCE PUBLICLY STIPULATED. HE NEEDS THIS OUTCOME TO VINDICATE HIS POLICY OF DIALOGUE AND ALSO TO STRENGTHEN HIS DOMESTIC CREDIBILITY. THE POTENTIAL FLAW IN THE AGREEMENTS WHICH MAY BE ON OFFER COULD PROVIDE FURTHER AMMUNITION FOR THOSE OPPOSED TO HIS INTERNAL POLICIES. BUT THE INDICATIONS ARE THAT HE SEES THE POTENTIAL GAINS AS OUTWEIGHING THE RISKS AND THAT HE WILL NOW PRESS AHEAD WITH SUMMIT PREPARATIONS.

DETAIL

2. SINCE THE GENEVA SUMMIT, GORBACHEV HAS SOUGHT TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM IN THE US/SOVIET DIALOGUE, ON ALL FRONTS, AND TO RIDE OUT THE RECURRENT SQUALLS WHICH HE COULD HAVE ALLOWED TO BLOW HIM OFF COURSE. THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT PAUSE IN HIS PUBLIC APPROACH MARCH TO A SUMMIT OCCURRED AFTER THE BLACK SEA NAVAL INCIDENTS AND THE US BOMBING OF LIBYA. BUT HE HAS REACTED WITH REMARKABLE RESTRAINT BOTH TO US SCORN FOR HISTORICAL MORATORIUM ON NUCLEAR TESTS AND, MORE RECENTLY, TO THE EXPULSION OF 25 DIPLOMATS FROM THE SOVIET UN MISSION. DESPITE MOUNTING EVIDENCE BOTH OF OPPOSITION TO HIS DOMESTIC POLICIES AND OF CONCERN THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS BEING TOO SOFT ON THE US, GORBACHEV HAS LOWERED, RATHER THAN RAISED, HIS SUMMIT DESIDERATA DOWN TO HIS CURRENT INSISTENCE ON 'VISIBLE PROGRESS IN SOLVING ONE OR TWO SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES'. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, HE HAS BEEN CAREFUL TO SECURE THE MORAL HIGH GROUND FROM WHICH HE CAN BLAME THE AMERICANS IF A SUMMIT DOES NOT MATERIALIZE IN 1986. BUT THE BREAKING OF THE LOG-JAM IN ARMS CONTROL TALKS IN MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON, NOW BEING FOLLOWED UP IN GENEVA, PRESUMABLY OWES SOMETHING TO SOVIET CONCESSIONS SEMICOLON AND EVEN

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BEFORE A POSITIVE CDE OUTCOME IN STOCKHOLM GAVE A FURTHER BOOST TO GORBACHEV'S POLICY OF DIALOGUE, SHEVARDNADZE HAD TAKEN TO WASHINGTON WHAT MUST BE ONE OF THE MOST CONCILIATORY BRIEFS EVER CARRIED BY A SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER. SO FAR, SO GOOD: BUT GORBACHEV MUST BE WELL AWARE OF THE POLITICAL RISKS TO WHICH HE WOULD BE EXPOSED IF HIS PERSISTENT MODERATION WERE EITHER TO MEET WITH A MAJOR REBUFF OR SIMPLY FAIL TO PRODUCE SOME POSITIVE RESULT IN TERMS OF SOVIET INTERESTS.

3. IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR OF SHEVARDNADZE'S TALKS IN WASHINGTON, THE MAXIMUM OUTCOME WHICH GORBACHEV CAN EXPECT A SUMMIT TO PRODUCE WOULD APPARENTLY CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING INGREDIENTS:-

- AND INTERIM AGREEMENT ON INF (100 WARHEAD PER SIDE QFZHU EUROPE WITHIN A GLOBAL LIMIT OF 200),
- THE REGISTRATION OF SOME PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC REDUCTIONS (EG OVERALL REDUCTIONS OF 30%, SUB-CEILINGS TO BE AGREED LATER),
- AGREEMENT TO WORK ON STRENGTHENING THE ABM TREATY AND PERHAPS A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO RESPECT IT MEANWHILE,
- AGREEMENT ON 'NUCLEAR RISK REDUCTION CENTRES',
- AGREEMENT ON CW NON-PROLIFERATION AND, POSSIBLY, AN OUTLINE AGREEMENT ON A CW BAN,
- PROGRESS TOWARDS US RATIFICATION OF THE TTB AND PNE TREATIES, AND PERHAPS AGREEMENT TO CONTINUE WORK ON A POSSIBLE CTB.

4. BY COMPARISON WITH THE GENEVA SUMMIT, THIS WOULD - EVEN IF THE LIST OF AGREEMENTS WERE IN THE EVENT TO TURN OUT TO BE A LITTLE SHORTER - ADD UP TO AN IMPRESSIVE PACKAGE. HOWEVER, IT WOULD STILL BE LIKELY TO EMBODY FEATURES WHICH COULD EXPOSE GORBACHEV TO THE CHARGE THAT HE HAD COME OFF SECOND BEST IN AREAS WHICH HE HIMSELF HAS LONG INSISTED TO BE CRUCIAL, NAMELY:-

- US REFUSAL (PRESUMABLY) TO AGREE TO THE ELIMINATION OF PERSHING MISS FROM THEIR INF QUOTA, WHICH WOULD THUS CONTINUE TO INCLUDE WHAT THE RUSSIANS CONTEND ARE FIRST-STRIKE WEAPONS AND WHICH THEY HAVE ALWAYS PROFESSED TO REGARD AS THE GREATEST THREAT,
- US DETERMINATION TO PURSUE SDI RESEARCH, TESTING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR AT LEAST 5 YEARS,
- A HIGH AND POSSIBLY UNACCEPTABLE VERIFICATION PRICE-TAG ATTACHED TO RATIFICATION OF THE TTB AND PNE TREATIES,
- AN UNYIELDING US ATTITUDE ON THE TEST MORATORIUM.

5. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE JOKERS IN THE PACK:-

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-3-
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- MOST OBVIOUSLY, DANILOFF: CURRENT ATMOSPHERICS INDICATE THAT A DEAL WILL BE DONE, BUT BOTH (APPARENTLY) US PUBLIC OPINION AND THE KGB ARE RATHER UNPREDICTABLE QUANTITIES.
- THE THREAT OF US BREAK-OUT FROM SALT II: COMMISSIONING OF THE 131ST B52 AROUND SUMMIT TIME WOULD PUT GORBACHEV IN A DIFFICULTY,
- THE RELENTLESS OPERATION OF MURPHY'S LAW IN US/SOVIET RELATIONS.

6. THE EVIDENCE SO FAR IS THAT, DESPITE ALL THIS, GORBACHEV BELIEVES THAT THE RISKS ARE WORTH TAKING. HE NEEDS A PRODUCTIVE SUMMIT, BOTH TO ENHANCE HIS DOMESTIC CREDIBILITY AND GRASS-ROOTS SUPPORT AT A TIME WHEN HIS INTERNAL POLICIES ARE EVIDENTALLY AROUSING OPPOSITION SEMICOLON AND TO CREATE A MORE FAVOURABLE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT FOR THE VIGOROUS PROSECUTION OF 8,534, -) 43%94.. IF A WASHINGTON SUMMIT WERE TO LAY THE FOUNDATIONS FOR FOURTEEN AGREEMENTS WHICH COULD THEN BE SIGNED DURING THE RETURN MATCH IN MOSCOW, SO MUCH THE BETTER. ALTHOUGH GORBACHEV MAY AVOID COMMITMENT TO SPECIFIC DATES FOR THE NEXT SUMMIT UNTIL HE HAS SLIGHTLY FIRMER GUARANTEES OF THE OUTCOME, HE IS UNLIKELY TO FAVOUR A SIGNIFICANT DELAY DURING WHICH HIS DOMESTIC CRITICS COULD CONSOLIDATE AND THE RISK OF SOME ADVENTITIOUS TURBULENCE IN US/SOVIET RELATIONS INCREASE.

CARTLEDGE

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EAST WEST & US/SOVIET RELATIONS
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SOVIET D	PS/MR RENTON
DEFENCE D	PS/MR EGGAR
RES D	PS/PUS
PLANNING STAFF	MR DEREK THOMAS
EED	CHIEF CLERK
NAD	MR GOODALL
WED	MR FERGUSSON
ACDD	SIR W HARDING
CRD	MR RATFORD
NEWS D	MR DAUNT
INFO D	MR FEARN
ECD (E)	MR LONG
FED	MR BRAITHWAITE
NED	MR BARRINGTON
PUSD	MR WINCHESTER
CSCE UNIT	MR RENWICK
PROTOCOL D	
Ps	
PS/LADY YOUNG	

-3-
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