

US/SOVIET ARMS CONTROL TALKS

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TELNO 894

OF 232355Z SEPTEMBER 86

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INFO PRIORITY UKDEL NATO, EC POSTS, UKMIS GENEVA

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UNGA 41: SHEVARDNADZE'S SPEECH 23 SEPTEMBER

SUMMARY

1. A POLISHED AND IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE THAT CAPTURED THE MOOD OF THE AUDIENCE. RESTRAINED REACTION TO PRESIDENT REAGAN'S CRITICISMS OF SOVIET POLICIES. MAIN FOCUS ON NUCLEAR TEST MORATORIUM AND SOVIET BLOC INITIATIVE FOR COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY. POSITIVE NONSES ON A SUMMIT. NO MENTION OF DANILOFF.

DETAIL

2. APPEARING RELAXED AND CONFIDENT THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER ADDRESSED THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR 40 MINUTES THIS MORNING. SHEVARDNADZE'S MANNER AND STYLE OF DELIVERY NO DOUBT OWED MUCH TO THE EXPERIENCE GAINED DURING THE 12 MONTHS THAT HAVE ELAPSED SINCE HE MADE HIS DEBUT HERE. THE SPEECH ITSELF WAS CLEVERLY CRAFTED AND STRUCK A CHORD WITH HIS AUDIENCE, WHO RESPONDED ON TWO OCCASIONS (A CALL FOR A COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN, AND PURSUIT OF DETENTE) WITH SUSTAINED APPLAUSE.

3. SHEVARDNADZE ADOPTED A POSITIVE TONE FROM THE OUTSET AND ESCHEWED A POINT BY POINT REBUTTAL OF THE CRITICISMS CONTAINED IN PRESIDENT REAGAN'S SPEECH TO THE GA YESTERDAY. OVERT ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES WERE IN GENERAL RELATIVELY MUTED. SHEVARDNADZE BEGAN BY FOCUSING ON THE QUOTE BRIGHT SPOTS ON THE WORLD'S HORIZON UNQUOTE WHICH PROVIDED A FAVOURABLE BACKGROUND FOR DEVELOPING A DIALOGUE. HE WENT ON TO ELABORATE IN FAMILIAR TERMS SOVIET ARMS

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CONTROL INITIATIVES INCLUDING A CALL ON THE UNITED STATES TO JOIN
IN THEIR MORATORIUM ON NUCLEAR TESTING. HIS ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE
USSR WAS WILLING TO SIGN QUOTE AT ANY TIME AND IN ANY PLACE UNQUOTE
A COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY DREW LONG AND LOUD APPLAUSE. IT WAS
TIME TO END ONCE AND FOR ALL QUOTE THIS FATEFUL DEADLY NUCLEAR
GAMBLE UNQUOTE. SHEVARDNADZE ALSO SAID THAT THE CHERNOBYL ACCIDENT
QUOTE A TRAGIC ERROR OF MAN UNQUOTE, CARRIED WITH IT LESSONS WITH
REGARD TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

4. THE SPEECH WAS ALSO PEPPERED WITH REFERENCES TO THE PROPOSAL PUT
FORWARD AT THIS SESSION BY WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES FOR THE CREATION
OF A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (WHICH WE HAVE
OF COURSE AMENDED TO QUOTE INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY UNQUOTE
BUT HE TOOK NO NOTICE OF THIS).

5. DECLINING TO BE DRAWN INTO A DETAILED RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT
REAGAN'S SPEECH, WHICH ALTHOUGH NOT DIFFICULT WOULD SIGNIFY A LACK
OF RESPECT FOR HIS AUDIENCE, SHEVARDNADZE REJECTED THE PRESIDENT'S
ESPOUSAL OF SDI. IT WAS A MYTH TO THINK THAT NEW TECHNOLOGIES
COULD ENSURE SECURITY. SHEVARDNADZE MADE NO (NO) MENTION OF
DANILOFF/ZACHAROV, NOR OF THE US DECISION TO EXPEL 25 MEMBERS OF
THE SOVIET MISSION. BUT HE DID ASK WHETHER THE UN COULD FUNCTION
PROPERLY IN A COUNTRY WHOSE GOVERNMENT DISPLAYED INTENSE HOSTILITY
TOWARDS AND UNDISGUISED DISRESPECT FOR THE ORGANISATION.
NEVERTHELESS RELATIONS WITH THE US WERE NOT ENTIRELY DEVOID OF
PROMISE. THERE WERE SIGNS OF MEANINGFUL AGREEMENTS EMERGING AND A
SUMMIT WAS QUOTE A REALISTIC POSSIBILITY UNQUOTE.

6. AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS, REGIONAL ISSUES WERE RELEGATED TO SECOND
PLACE BEHIND DISARMAMENT. THEY WERE DEALT WITH CURSORILY AND ALONG
STANDARD LINES. THERE WERE THE USUAL PLATITUDES FOR THE
NON-ALIGNED INCLUDING THE SUGGESTION THAT THE UN WOULD PROFIT IF
A COUNTRY PRESIDING IN THE NAM PARTICIPATED QUOTE IN ONE FORM OR
ANOTHER UNQUOTE IN THE WORK OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

7. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR ASKED ME THIS EVENING IF I HAD NOT NOTICED
A MARKED DIFFERENCE FROM MR GROMYKO'S STYLE. I HAD. THIS IS
PERHAPS THE MOST STRIKING THING ABOUT THIS EFFECTIVELY PRESENTED
SPEECH.

8. FULL TEXT FOLLOWS BY FACSIMILE TO SOVIET DEPARTMENT AND BY BAG
TO OTHER SELECTED ADDRESSEES.

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