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FM MOSCOW

TO DESKBY 071630Z FCO

TELNO 537 *PARTS 1 AND 2 OF 2 PARTS*

OF 071400Z APRIL 87

AND TO SAVING ULAN BATOR

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, BONN, PARIS, UKDEL NATO

INFO PRIORITY OTHER EC POSTS, EAST EUROPEAN POSTS, HELSINKI

INFO PRIORITY PEKING, NEW DELHI, ISLAMABAD, UKMIS VIENNA,

INFO PRIORITY UKDIS GENEVA, UKDEL NEW YORK, UKDEL CSCE VIENNA

MY TELNO 538: THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO MOSCOW 23 MARCH -
1 APRIL

SUMMARY

1. A HISTORIC VISIT WHICH BOTH RAISED THE LEVEL AND THE UTILITY OF THE EAST-WEST DIALOGUE AND PRODUCED SOLID ACHIEVEMENTS IN UK/SOVIET RELATIONS. AS EXPECTED, NO BREAKTHROUGHS IN ARMS CONTROL, AND IN OTHER MAJOR ISSUES MORE DISAGREEMENT THAN AGREEMENT: BUT A REMARKABLE RAPPORT, BOTH IN PRIVATE WITH THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP AND IN PUBLIC BOTH WITH THEM AND WITH THE SOVIET PEOPLE. A SIGNIFICANT EXTENSION OF THE FRONTIERS OF 'GLASNOST', PARTICULARLY THROUGH AN UNCENSORED TV INTERVIEW OF NOTABLE CANDOUR. A VALUABLE START TO THE LONG-TERM PROCESS OF BRINGING HOME TO THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP THE REALITIES OF WESTERN CONCERNS, ASPIRATIONS AND VALUES: AND, EQUALLY, CLEARER INSIGHTS INTO THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP'S COMMITMENT TO 'PERESTROIKA' AND INTO THE MAGNITUDE OF THE TASK WHICH FACES THEM.

DETAIL

PROGRAMME

2. I HAVE REPORTED THE FULL DETAILS OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S PROGRAMME, FOR THE RECORD, IN MY TEL NO 1 SAVING (NOT TO ALL). AMONG THE MANY PRECEDENTS ESTABLISHED BY THIS VISIT WAS THE FACT THAT THE DRAFT PROGRAMME WAS COMMUNICATED TO ME TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE INSTEAD OF THE MORE CUSTOMARY 2 HOURS. FROM THE FIRST, IT EMBODIED MOST OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S OWN REQUESTS AND THOSE, SUCH AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A WALKABOUT, WHICH WERE NOT AT FIRST INCLUDED WERE QUICKLY AND READILY AGREED. GORBACHEV WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO INJECT PERSONAL, INFORMAL ELEMENTS INTO THE PROGRAMME: THE SMALL SUPPER PARTY IN THE INTERVAL OF THE BALLET ON 23 MARCH WAS A GRACIOUS TOUCH AND THE INFORMAL AND EVEN SMALLER DINNER ON 31 MARCH WAS, I BELIEVE WITHOUT PRECEDENT FOR AN OFFICIAL VISIT. ON BOTH THESE OCCASIONS, THE CONVERSATION WAS GENERAL, LIVELY AND TOTALLY RELAXED. THE EXTENT OF RAISA GORBACHEVA'S PARTICIPATION - IN THE WELCOME AND FAREWELL CEREMONIES IN THE KREMLIN, AT THE BALLET, THE OFFICIAL BANQUET AND THE INFORMAL DINNER - WAS NOTABLE, PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE CRITICISM WHICH SHE IS BELIEVED TO HAVE ATTRACTED FOR ADOPTING TOO HIGH A PROFILE ON PREVIOUS STATE

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OCCASIONS. IT WAS CLEAR FROM OUR FIRST SIGHT OF THE DRAFT PROGRAMME THAT GORBACHEV WAS DETERMINED TO MAKE THE VISIT BOTH UNUSUAL AND A SUCCESS.

3. THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ABLE TO MEET THE SAKHAROV'S OVER LUNCH AND THREE JEWISH REFUSENIKS (INCLUDING JOSIF BEGUN) OVER BREAKFAST. I INFORMED THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES IN ADVANCE OF BOTH EVENTS: NOT AN EYEBROW WAS RAISED.

DOCUMENTS

4. YOU AND SHEVARDNADZE SIGNED FOUR BILATERAL DOCUMENTS:
- I) A BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION IN SPACE SEMI COLON
 - II) A BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON THE UPGRADING OF THE UK/SOVIET HOT LINE SEMI COLON
 - III) A BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON AN EXCHANGE OF SITES FOR NEW EMBASSIES IN MOSCOW AND IN LONDON SEMI COLON
 - IV) A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON CULTURE, INFORMATION AND EDUCATION.

THE TEXTS OF (I) AND (IV) WERE PUBLISHED IN FULL IN THE SOVIET PRESS. THE MOU WILL, IF WE TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF ITS PROVISIONS, PROVIDE A VALUABLE BASIS FOR THE EXPANSION OF HUMAN EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IN A VARIETY OF FIELDS: PERHAPS EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT PROVIDES FOR THE 'FREE AND NORMAL RECEPTION' OF RADIO BROADCASTS - WHICH SHOULD INHIBIT ANY RESUMPTION OF JAMMING OF THE BBC'S RUSSIAN SERVICE - AND FOR 'FREE AND NORMAL' ACCESS TO THE CULTURAL AND INFORMATION EVENTS AND ARRANGEMENTS OF BOTH SIDES ON THE TERRITORY OF THE OTHER WHICH SHOULD ENABLE US AT LAST TO SECURE FREEDOM OF ACCESS FOR SOVIET CITIZENS TO OUR EMBASSY FILM SHOWS AND LIBRARY.

5. THE VISIT HASTENED THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF SEVERAL COMMERCIAL NEGOTIATIONS AND WAS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WINNING OF A MAJOR (£100 MILLION) CONTRACT BY JOHN BROWN. THE VALUE OF CONTRACTS AND LETTERS OF INTENT SIGNED AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT AMOUNTED TO £403 MILLION.

6. QUITE APART FROM ITS WIDER SIGNIFICANCE, THEREFORE, THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT PRODUCED SOLID ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE UK/SOVIET BILATERAL CONTEXT. THE PRIME MINISTER INVITED BOTH GORBACHEV AND RYZHKOV TO VISIT THE UK: SHEVARDNADZE RENEWED HIS INVITATION TO YOU TO VISIT THE SOVIET UNION LATER THIS YEAR.

THE TALKS

7. THE SEVEN HOURS OF OFFICIAL TALKS WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER HAD WITH GORBACHEV (WITH ONLY NOTE-TAKERS AND INTERPRETERS PRESENT) ON 30 MARCH WAS SUPPLEMENTED BY A FURTHER FOUR HOURS AT THE TWO DINNERS ON 30 AND 31 MARCH. THIS INVESTMENT OF TIME BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY IN A VISIT BY A HEAD OF GOVERNMENT IS, AGAIN, WITHOUT PRECEDENT. MY TELNO 537 SUMMARISED THE MAIN POINTS WHICH AROSE. BRIEFLY, THE PRIME MINISTER EXPLORED WITH GORBACHEV FOUR

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MAIN THEMES:

- I) THE ROOTS OF MISUNDERSTANDING AND MISTRUST BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE WEST SEMI COLON
- II) THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOVIET REGIME'S CONDUCT OF ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT CAN EXPECT TO COMMAND TRUST AND CONFIDENCE INTERNATIONALLY SEMI COLON
- III) THE THEORY OF NUCLEAR DETERRENCE AND THE UK'S REFUSAL TO ACCEPT A EUROPE IN WHICH SOVIET SUPERIORITY IN CONVENTIONAL AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS WOULD BE UNOPPOSED BY NUCLEAR WEAPONS SEMI COLON
- IV) SPECIFIC ISSUES OF ARMS CONTROL, WITH THE SPOT LIGHT ON A POSSIBLE INF AGREEMENT COMBINED WITH CONSTRAINTS AND FOLLOW-ON NEGOTIATIONS ON SRINF.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO HAD 1 AND A HALF HOURS TALKS WITH RYZHKOV ON 31 MARCH, DEVOTED LARGELY TO ECONOMIC AND BILATERAL COMMERCIAL TOPICS (MY TELNO 552). YOUR OWN SIX HOURS OF TALKS (INCLUDING AN INFORMAL DINNER) WITH SHEVARDNADZE (MY TELNOS 511-522 AND 533-544) WERE A VALUABLE COMPLEMENT TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S DISCUSSIONS, COVERING AS THEY DID THE FULL RANGE OF SPECIFIC BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND ARMS CONTROL ISSUES.

8. THE OUTSTANDING CHARACTERISTIC OF ALL THE DISCUSSIONS WAS THE DEGREE OF FRANKNESS IN WHICH BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND GORBACHEV FELT ABLE TO INDULGE WITHOUT THROWING THEM OFF THE RAILS OR IMPAIRING A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WHICH, IN FACT, IMPROVED STEADILY THROUGHOUT THE VISIT.

9. THE MAIN THEMES OF THE TALKS WERE REFLECTED IN BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER'S AND GORBACHEV'S SPEECHES IN THE KREMLIN ON 30 MARCH, WHICH ACCURATELY EXPOSED WIDE DIVERGENCES OF VIEW. GORBACHEV'S SPEECH IN PARTICULAR (COMPOSED WITH ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S TEXT) CONTAINED VIRTUALLY NONE OF THE SPACE-NOTES CUSTOMARY ON SUCH OCCASIONS. DESPITE THE GULF BETWEEN THE FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL POSITIONS OF HOST AND VISITOR, HOWEVER, THE TALKS WERE VERY FAR FROM BEING A DIALOGUE OF THE DEAF. I DOUBT WHETHER GORBACHEV HAD PREVIOUSLY HEARD A MORE POWERFUL EXPOSITION OF THE CASE FOR NUCLEAR DETERRENCE NOR A MORE CANDID EXPLANATION OF THE REASONS FOR WESTERN MISTRUST OF THE SOVIET UNION. THESE CANNOT BUT HAVE LEFT SOME IMPRESSION ON A RATIONAL AND INTELLIGENT MAN. THE TALKS WILL, EQUALLY, HAVE GIVEN THE PRIME MINISTER BOTH AN INSIGHT INTO THE DEPTH OF GORBACHEV'S COMMITMENT TO THE REFORM OF THE SOVIET ECONOMY AND SOCIETY AND DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF THE EXTENT OF HIS IGNORANCE AND MISPERCEPTION OF THE NATURE OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES.

10. THE VISIT ALSO HAD A MUCH WIDER PUBLIC DIMENSION THAN IS USUAL. SOVIET PRESS AND TV COVERAGE WAS EXTENSIVE, INCLUDING NOT ONLY THE UNEDITED TEXTS OF THE MAIN SPEECHES BUT ALSO THOSE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S OPENING STATEMENT AT HER PRESS CONFERENCE AND HER STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON 2 APRIL. SOVIET PRESS AND TV ALSO REPORTED FULLY AND FACTUALLY EACH EVENT IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S

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PROGRAMME. NOT SURPRISINGLY, HOWEVER, TV COVERAGE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S WALKABOUTS IN ZAGORSK, THE MOSCOW SUBURB OF KRYLATSKOYE AND TBILISI DID LESS THAN JUSTICE TO THE SCALE AND DRAMA OF THESE EVENTS, WHICH EVOKED REMARKABLE DISPLAYS OF GENUINE INTEREST AND GOODWILL ON THE PART OF THOUSANDS OF SOVIET CITIZENS. THE SOVIET PUBLIC IS NOT ACCUSTOMED TO FOREIGN LEADERS PLUNGING INTO THEIR MIDST AND REACTED WITH GREAT ENTHUSIASM. THE CROWD SCENES IN TBILISI, IN PARTICULAR, WERE REMINISCENT OF THOSE IN A KEY CONSTITUENCY DURING A GENERAL ELECTION.

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(PART TWO)

11. THE PRIME MEDIA EVENT OF THE VISIT, HOWEVER, WAS THE PRIME MINISTER'S 50-MINUTE TELEVISED INTERVIEW WITH 3 SOVIET JOURNALISTS, TRANSMITTED AT 11 P.M. ON 31 MARCH BUT TRAILED IN ADVANCE ON THE EVENING NEWS PROGRAMME AND PROBABLY SEEN, THEREFORE, BY A SOVIET AUDIENCE OF AT LEAST 120 MILLION. FROM IT, THE SOVIET PUBLIC LEARNED FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT IT WAS ONLY THEIR GOVERNMENT'S DEPLOYMENT OF SS20S WHICH HAD PROVOKED THE STATIONING OF CRUISE AND PERSHING II MISSILES IN WESTERN EUROPE: THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS THE WORLD'S ONLY OPERATIONAL ABM SYSTEM, DEPLOYED AROUND MOSCOW, AND THE ONLY OPERATIONAL ASAT SYSTEM: AND THAT THEIR COUNTRY, LIKE THE US, HAS ENGAGED IN EXTENSIVE RESEARCH IN THE FIELDS OF LASERS AND ELECTRONIC PULSE BEAMS. THE PRIME MINISTER'S HANDLING OF THE INTERVIEW HAS EVOKED WIDESPREAD, IF SOMETIMES RUEFUL, ADMIRATION. AS A SENIOR SOVIET MFA OFFICIAL REMARKED TO ONE OF MY COLLEAGUES 'SHE WALKED ALL OVER THEM': AND A SOVIET TRADE UNIONIST, AT MY RECEPTION FOR A TUC DELEGATION ON 3 APRIL COMMENTED, IN AN UNATTRACTIVE SIMILE, THAT 'SHE SQUASHED THEM LIKE KITTENS'. ONE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S INTERVIEWERS SIMONOV, SUBSEQUENTLY ADMITTED ON A TV CHAT-SHOW THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAD RECEIVED COMPLAINTS THAT THEY HAD BEEN FEEBLE IN REBUTTING THE PRIME MINISTER'S ARGUMENTS BUT ALSO THAT THEY HAD BEEN RUDE TO HER BY INTERRUPTING. HE ENQUIRED, PLAINTIVELY: 'WAS NOT WHAT WE SAW IN ESSENCE AN UNPRECEDENTED EXPERIMENT IN GLASNOST' BY SOVIET TELEVISION?' INDEED IT WAS.

AN ASSESSMENT

12. IT IS DIFFICULT TO INTERPRET WITH CONFIDENCE GORBACHEV'S MOTIVES IN HELPING TO MAKE THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT SUCH A REMARKABLE SUCCESS AND IN SANCTIONING THE 'FIRSTS', INCLUDING THE WALKABOUTS AND TV INTERVIEW, WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO IT. THE

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PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WAS CLEARLY AN IMPORTANT FACTOR SEMI COLON GORBACHEV AND HIS WIFE HAVE GENUINELY WARM MEMORIES OF THEIR VISIT TO CHEQUERS IN 1984, DURING A VISIT TO THE UK WHICH ADDED TO GORBACHEV'S STATURE AT HOME AT A CRUCIAL MOMENT. GORBACHEV ALSO ENJOYS, EVIDENTLY, THE INTELLECTUAL STIMULUS OF A GOOD ARGUMENT: I DOUBT WHETHER MANY OF HIS FOREIGN VISITORS ARE PREPARED TO BE SUFFICIENTLY CANDID TO GIVE HIM ONE. MORE IMPORTANTLY GORBACHEV, STILL RESENTFUL OF THE WESTERN EUROPEAN, AND SPECIFICALLY UK, ROLE IN SALVAGING WESTERN SECURITY AFTER REYKJAVIK, NEEDED TO EXPLORE THE NATURE AND DEPTH OF WESTERN EUROPEAN SECURITY PREOCCUPATIONS IN ORDER TO GIVE HIMSELF A CLEARER MAP FROM WHICH TO NAVIGATE THE COURSE OF FUTURE US/SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS ON ARMS CONTROL. FOR THIS PURPOSE, AND NOT ONLY BECAUSE OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN LEADERS ARE TEMPORARILY DISQUALIFIED FOR THE ROLE, THE PRIME MINISTER WAS CLEARLY THE MOST VALID AND VALUABLE INTERLOCUTOR. FINALLY, GORBACHEV NEEDED A SUCCESSFUL FOREIGN POLICY OCCASION, SOMETHING WHICH 1986 CONSPICUOUSLY LACKED: IT WAS EASIER FOR HIM TO ENSURE THIS ON HIS HOME GROUND. THE WORDING OF THE POLITBURO COMMUNIQUE ENDORSING THE RESULTS OF THE VISIT (MY TELNO 573) PLACED STRONG EMPHASIS ON ITS 'POSITIVE' ASPECTS DESPITE THE WIDE AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT WHICH THE VISIT EXPOSED, BOTH PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY. THERE HAS NOT, SO FAR, BEEN THE PROPAGANDA BACKLASH AGAINST THE PRIME MINISTER'S ARGUMENTS WHICH I WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SURPRISED TO SEE IN THE SOVIET MEDIA ONCE THE VISIT WAS OVER. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF WASPISH CONTRIBUTIONS BY ARBATOV AND GERASIMOV (MFA SPOKESMAN) ATTACKING THE PRIME MINISTER'S BELIEF IN NUCLEAR DETERRENCE, POST-VISIT COMMENTARIES HAVE CONTINUED TO ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE.

13. FROM THE UK, AND WESTERN, VIEWPOINT, THE PRIME MINISTER'S ACHIEVEMENT DURING THE VISIT WAS TO GIVE GORBACHEV A MUCH CLEARER PICTURE OF THE REALITIES OF WHICH, HOWEVER UNPALATABLE THEY MAY BE TO HIM, HIS POLICIES MUST TAKE ACCOUNT. AS I HAVE ALREADY REPORTED (MY TUR) THE PRIME MINISTER, BY ESCHEWING FUDGE AND FLANNEL, HAS RAISED THE EAST/WEST DIALOGUE TO A NEW LEVEL OF USEFULNESS. SHE HAS SHOWN THAT PLAIN SPEAKING AND RATIONAL ARGUMENT NEED NOT BE INHIBITED BY FEARS FOR 'THE ATMOSPHERE'. THROUGH HER WALKABOUTS, HER SPEECHES AND, ABOVE ALL HER TV INTERVIEW, SHE HAS ALSO PUSHED BACK THE FRONTIERS OF GLASNOST' IN THE AREA, THAT OF EXTERNAL POLICY, IN WHICH IT HAS SO FAR BEEN LEAST APPARENT. THESE ARE VERY CONSIDERABLE ACHIEVEMENTS: THE PROBLEM NOW IS HOW BEST TO BUILD ON THEM.

FOLLOW-UP

14. THE TASK OF BRINGING HOME TO THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP THE REALITIES OF WESTERN CONCERNS AND OF WESTERN SOCIETIES IS LONG-TERM. THE DIFFICULTY IS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S ACHIEVEMENT WAS VERY MUCH A PERSONAL ONE. IDEALLY, OTHER WESTERN LEADERS, ON FUTURE VISITS TO THIS COUNTRY, SHOULD FOLLOW HER EXAMPLES OF CANDOUR AND INNOVATION: BUT RELATIVELY FEW OF THEM ARE OBVIOUSLY EQUIPPED BY TEMPERAMENT OR STYLE TO DO SO. IT IS NEVERTHELESS ENCOURAGING THAT ON 4 APRIL SHEVARDNADZE TOLD MY NEW U.S. COLLEAGUE

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THAT "THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM" OVER ARRANGING FOR SHULTZ TO GIVE THE TELEVISED INTERVIEW WHICH THE AMERICANS HAD REQUESTED SOME TIME AGO WITHOUT ELICITING A SOVIET RESPONSE: AND THAT SHEVARDNADZE WENT ON TO ENQUIRE, WITHOUT PROMPTING, WHETHER SHULTZ WOULD ALSO LIKE A WALKABOUT. THE PRIME MINISTER HAS BLAZED A TRAIL. WE SHOULD FOR OUR OWN PART CARRY FORWARD OUR BILATERAL DIALOGUE IN THE STYLE WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER HAS NOW ESTABLISHED, AT AS MANY LEVELS AS POSSIBLE. YOUR OWN VISIT TO MOSCOW LATER THIS YEAR WILL PROVIDE THE NEXT OPPORTUNITY FOR THIS. WE SHOULD AIM TO SECURE A RETURN VISIT BY GORBACHEV OR, IF THAT PROVES IMPOSSIBLE, BY RYZHKOV, TO THE UK IN 1988.

15. WE SHOULD ALSO EXPLOIT IN ALL AREAS OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS THE IMPETUS WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT HAS GIVEN TO THEM. THIS APPLIES PARTICULARLY TO THE ENERGETIC IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MOU ON CULTURE, EDUCATION AND INFORMATION: THIS EMBASSY AND, I BELIEVE, THE DEPARTMENT ARE DRAWING UP AN ACTION PROGRAMME ON THIS.

CONCLUSION

16. STANDING CLOSE TO THE EVENT, AND IN ITS IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH, IT WOULD BE EASY TO GET THE PROPORTIONS OR THE PERSPECTIVE WRONG. MOREOVER, THE VISIT WAS REplete WITH PARADOX. ON THE MAJOR ISSUES, NO BREAKTHROUGHS WERE EXPECTED OR ACHIEVED: BUT THE VISIT HAS NEVERTHELESS BEEN ACCOUNTED AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS BY EVERY OBJECTIVE OBSERVER. THE AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT DWARFED THOSE OF AGREEMENT: BUT THE WARMTH OF THE ATMOSPHERICS, BOTH PERSONAL AND POLITICAL, WAS STRIKING. DESPITE - OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF - THESE CONTRADICTIONS, I HAVE NO HESITATION IN DESCRIBING THE VISIT AS HISTORIC. IT ESTABLISHED A NEW BENCH-MARK FOR THE QUALITY OF EAST-WEST DIALOGUE. IT WILL REMAIN A REFERENCE POINT FOR FUTURE EAST-WEST ENCOUNTERS. IT BROKE NEW GROUND IN UK/SOVIET RELATIONS WHICH IT IS NOW THIS EMBASSY'S TASK TO CULTIVATE.

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