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FM HAVANA
TO DESKBY 050800Z FCO
TELNO 167
OF 050015Z APRIL 89
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, NEW YORK, MOSCOW

MY TELNO 157 : CUBA/SOVIET UNION : GORBACHEV VISIT *mt*

SUMMARY

1. GORBACHEV LEAVES HAVANA FOR LONDON AFTER WHAT HAS BEEN IN PUBLIC RELATIONS TERMS A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL VISIT. GRATITUDE EXPRESSED FOR THE MASSIVE SOVIET CONTRIBUTION TO THE CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OVER THE YEARS. A TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COLLABORATION SIGNED. CASTRO AND GORBACHEV EMPHASISED THAT THERE WERE NO PROBLEMS BETWEEN THEM, AND THAT EACH COUNTRY HAD TO FIND ITS OWN FORMULA FOR BUILDING SOCIALISM.

DETAIL

2. GORBACHEV WAS GREETED WITH AN EXPANSIVE EMBRACE BY A BEAMING FIDEL CASTRO AT 1800 LOCAL ON 2 APRIL. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SHEVARDNADZE, KAMENTSEV, AND DOZENS OF LESSER OFFICIALS FROM BOTH THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY. AFTER THE ARRIVAL CEREMONY, IN WHICH (UNUSUALLY) RAUL CASTRO JOINED HIS BROTHER, THE TWO PRESIDENTS DROVE IN AN OPEN LIMOUSINE FOR A 16 MILE TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION AROUND HAVANA. THE CROWDS MOBILISED TO LINE THE ROUTE SEEMED ENTHUSIASTIC IN THEIR WELCOME. GORBACHEV NOTED THE WARMTH OF HIS RECEPTION AT A PRESS CONFERENCE.
3. PUBLIC WARMTH CARRIED OVER INTO THE SECOND DAY. AFTER LAYING THE OBLIGATORY WREATH AT THE MEMORIAL TO CUBA'S NATIONAL HERO JOSE MARTI, OFFICIAL CONVERSATIONS FILLED THE MORNING. THE CUBAN SIDE DISCLOSED LITTLE ABOUT THE SUBJECTS COVERED, BUT GERASIMOV SAID THAT DISCUSSIONS HAD FOCUSED ON LATIN AMERICAN PROBLEMS AND ESPECIALLY THE IMPACT OF THE NARCOTICS TRADE AND DEBT, WHICH BOTH LEADERS CATEGORISED QUOTE EFFECTIVE ROBBERY UNQUOTE. BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS WERE ALSO ON THE AGENDA. ACCORDING TO GERASIMOV THERE WAS DISCUSSION OF THE NEED TO ACHIEVE A BALANCE IN CUBAN/SOVIET TRADE IN THE FUTURE.
4. IN THE AFTERNOON, GORBACHEV, ACCOMPANIED BY CASTRO, TOURED

EXPOCUBA, THE PERMANENT EXHIBITION DEVOTED TO THE ECONOMIC, INDUSTRIAL, SCIENTIFIC AND SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE REVOLUTION. MEANWHILE WORKING LEVEL CONVERSATIONS WERE HELD BETWEEN TEAMS LED BY VICE-PRESIDENT CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ, AND BY SHEVARDNADZE AND KAMENTSEV. ACCORDING TO GRANMA, RODRIGUEZ TALKED TO SHEVARDNADZE ABOUT CURRENT US/USSR DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS, AND TO KAMENTSEV ABOUT TRADE BILATERAL COOPERATION AGREEMENTS, INCLUDING THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT FIVE-YEAR COOPERATION AGREEMENT (1991-1995). IN SEPARATE TALKS, POLITBURO MEMBER JORGE RISQUET HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH YAKOVLEV ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND RELATIONS BETWEEN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNIST PARTIES. THE DAY CLOSED WITH THE USUAL STATE RECEPTION.

5. GORBACHEV SPENT THE MORNING OF 4 APRIL VISITING A MICRO-BRIGADE CONSTRUCTION SITE, A FAMILY CLINIC AND THE INSTITUTE OF GENETIC ENGINEERING AND BIOTECHNOLOGY. IN THE AFTERNOON, BOTH LEADERS SIGNED A TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COLLABORATION (TEXT BY BAG) WHICH AT FIRST GLANCE CONTAINS LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE. THEN CAME THE MUCH AWAITED GORBACHEV SPEECH TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

6. CASTRO INTRODUCED HIS VISITOR, AND HIS LENGTHY REMARKS TOUCHED ON VIRTUALLY ALL THE POINTS SUBSEQUENTLY DEVELOPED BY GORBACHEV. HE WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO PAY EXTRAVAGANT PRAISE TO SOVIET ASSISTANCE OVER THE YEARS, AND TO EMPHASISE THAT THERE WAS NO CRISIS IN SOVIET/CUBAN RELATIONS OF THE KIND REPORTED BY THE WESTERN PRESS. AFTER AN EMOTIONAL DEFENCE OF CUBA'S INTERNAL POLICIES, HE SAID NEVERTHELESS THAT HE AND GORBACHEV HAD AGREED THAT WHAT WAS APPROPRIATE FOR A HUGE SUPERPOWER WAS NOT NECESSARILY APPLICABLE TO A SMALL CARIBBEAN ISLAND. CASTRO PAID TRIBUTE TO THE SOVIET POSITION ON DISARMAMENT, TO SOVIET SUPPORT FOR THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER, AND TO ITS DECLARATION OF A DEBT MORATORIUM. HE CONTRASTED SOVIET MOVES TO REDUCE TENSION IN EG AFGHANISTAN, ANGOLA AND CENTRAL AMERICA WITH US QUOTE IRRESPONSIBILITY UNQUOTE IN REFUSING TO PUT A STOP TO THEIR INTERFERENCE IN ALL THREE AREAS. HE ALSO MOCKED THE BRADY PLAN AS BEING UTTERLY INADEQUATE IN DEALING WITH THE DEBT PROBLEM. HE WAS STRENUOUS IN PRAISING THE SOVIET UNION AS THE NATURAL ALLY OF THE PEOPLES OF THE THIRD WORLD.

7. GORBACHEV SPOKE FROM A PREPARED TEXT. AFTER SUITABLE THANKS AND PRAISE OF CASTRO AND THE CUBAN PEOPLE, HE EMPHASISED THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS PROUD TO BE CUBA'S ALLY. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO WERE VERY STABLE, EVEN THOUGH THERE WERE OCCASIONAL DIFFERENCES ON PARTICULAR DETAILS ON HOW SOCIALISM SHOULD BE

BUILT. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT BOTH SIDES SHOULD WORK HARDER TO BE MORE DYNAMIC, AND HE URGED THAT THERE SHOULD BE MORE CONTACTS AND COLLABORATION EG. BY WAY OF MIXED ENTERPRISES AND COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS, WHICH COULD ALSO EXPORT TO LATIN AMERICA.

8. GORBACHEV THEN ADDRESSED THE PERESTROIKA ISSUE, EXPLAINING THAT HE HAD NEEDED TO STIMULATE THE PEOPLE'S CREATIVITY AND SATISFY THEIR NEEDS. IN PRODUCING ECONOMIC REFORMS, POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS HAD ALSO TO BE REFORMED, AND THE PEOPLE HAD TO BE INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS IF THEY WERE TO ACCEPT IT FULLY. SOME UNACCEPTABLE PROPOSALS HAD SURFACED, BUT THESE WERE THE RESULTS OF INEXPERIENCE. BUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE SOVIET UNION WAS NOT A UNIVERSAL RECIPE. HE AGREED WITH CASTRO: EACH COUNTRY HAD TO FIND ITS OWN SOLUTION.

9. ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION, GORBACHEV SAID THAT OVER THE PAST YEAR THERE HAD BEEN A MOVE AWAY FROM CONFRONTATION AND TOWARDS SEEKING POLITICAL SOLUTIONS TO OLD MILITARY PROBLEMS. IN THE INCREASINGLY COMPLEX AND TECHNOLOGICAL WORLD, SOLUTIONS HAD TO BE SOUGHT ON AN INTERDEPENDENT AND GLOBAL BASIS. HE REITERATED THE BASIC TENETS OF THE SOVIET VIEW OF THE WORLD, WHICH HE HAD OUTLINED IN HIS SPEECH TO THE UNGA IN DECEMBER. HE SPECIFICALLY OPPOSED ALL ATTEMPTS TO EXPORT EITHER REVOLUTION OR COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

10. TURNING TO REGIONAL PROBLEMS HE SAID:

- A) AFGHANISTAN. THE SOVIET UNION HAD BEEN SCRUPULOUS IN WITHDRAWING ITS TROOPS. BUT IN BREACH OF THE GENEVA AGREEMENT, THE US AND PAKISTAN WERE CONTINUING TO INTERFERE. HE FEARED THAT IF THIS WENT ON THERE COULD BE INCALCULABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND THE REGION. THE RESOLUTION OF THE AFGHAN PROBLEM WAS A TEST CASE. IF RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR COULD SOLVE THE PROBLEM, ITS SUCCESS WOULD INFLUENCE OTHER CONFLICTS.
- B) SOUTH WEST AFRICA. AFTER PRAISING CUBA'S HISTORIC ROLE IN ANGOLA AND WELCOMING THE PROSPECT OF NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE, HE MADE NO MENTION OF CURRENT DIFFICULTIES.
- C) MIDDLE EAST. ROUTINE MENTION WAS MADE TO THE ISRAEL/PALESTINE PROBLEM, AND OF THE ALARMING SITUATION IN THE LEBANON, BUT THERE WERE NO SPECIFIC PROPOSALS.
- D) NICARAGUA. THE SOVIET UNION THOUGHT THE SOLUTION PROPOSED BY THE FIVE CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENTS WAS A GOOD BASIS FOR PEACE IN THE REGION. NICARAGUA HAD BEGUN TO FULFIL ITS OBLIGATIONS TO DEMOCRATISE: IT WAS NOW FOR ITS NEIGHBOURS TO PLAY THEIR PART, AND FOR THE US TO BEHAVE RESPONSIBLY AND TO CEASE SUPPORTING THE

CONTRAS. GORBACHEV PARTICULARLY ATTACKED QUAYLE'S REPORTED REFERENCE TO CENTRAL AMERICA AS THE US BACKYARD. HE ENDED BY STRESSING THAT THE ONLY WAY TO GUARANTEE PEACE WAS TO STOP ALL MILITARY SUPPLIES TO CENTRAL AMERICA FROM ANY SOURCE.

11. HIS PERORATION ADDRESSED UNDER-DEVELOPMENT AND LATIN AMERICA. HE MADE EFFUSIVE COMMENTS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONTINENT, WITH WHICH THE SOVIET UNION WAS IMPROVING AND BROADENING ITS CONTACTS. THE SOVIET UNION SUPPORTED THE TREATY OF TLATLOLCO. IF THE REGIONAL COUNTRIES WISHED TO CALL A CONFERENCE TO GUARANTEE A NUCLEAR-FREE LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN, THE SOVIET UNION WOULD PARTICIPATE. LA MAJOR PROBLEM FOR THE CONTINENT, AND ELSEWHERE, WAS THE GROWING GULF BETWEEN THE DEVELOPED RICH AND THE UNDER-DEVELOPED POOR. DEBT WAS A BIG PART OF THIS, AND HE HOPED TO SEE THE WESTERN COUNTRIES SHOW MORE UNDERSTANDING. HE ARGUED THAT, INSTEAD OF A NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, ALL STATES SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN THIS PROCESS.

COMMENT

12. GORBACHEV'S PRESS CONFERENCE IS STILL TO COME. AS AN IMMEDIATE IMPRESSION, HIS VISIT HAS GONE WELL AND NO VISIBLE DIFFERENCES HAVE BEEN REVEALEDWN THOUGH GORBACHEV HAS PUT HIS OWN JUSTIFICATION FOR PERESTROIKA FIRMLY ON THE RECORD BEFORE THE CUBAN PEOPLE. HE HAS ALSO MADE A VAGUE GESTURE TOWARDS LATIN AMERICA, AND TOWARDS THE NEED FOR RESOLVING THE DEBT ISSUE. PREDICTABLY THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC SIGN THAT THE USSR IS ABOUT TO PUT THE SQUEEZE ON CUBA ECONOMICALLY, OR TO ATTEMPT TO PRESS CASTRO TO MEND HIS WAYS OVER EG. CENTRAL AMERICA (THOUGH SEE FINAL SENTENCE OF PARA 10).

13. FULLER COMMENT AND REFLECTION WILL FOLLOW BY BAG.

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