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GORBACHEV'S VISIT TO FRANCE: COMMENT.

## SUMMARY

1. FRENCH GOVERNMENT HIGHLY SATISFIED WITH THE VISIT, THOUGH LITTLE OF NEW SUBSTANCE ON INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS. PERSONAL ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN MITTERRAND AND GORBACHEV GOOD. GORBACHEV CONFIDENT AND IMPRESSIVE IN PRIVATE, LESS SURE IN HIS PUBLIC APPEARANCES.
2. IMPROVED STRUCTURE FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH A WIDE RANGING SET OF AGREEMENTS, THOUGH NOT ALL OF MUCH SUBSTANCE. IN THE RESTRICTED TALKS GORBACHEV SHOWED CONTINUING UNCERTAINTY ABOUT US POLICY IN EUROPE. LITTLE ON ARMS CONTROL BEYOND HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS. GORBACHEV EMBARRASSED OVER CHINA.

## DETAIL

3. BLOT (QUAI DIRECTOR FOR EUROPE) GAVE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWELVE AN UNUSUALLY SWIFT BRIEFING YESTERDAY ON THE VISIT. MINISTER HAS ALSO SPOKEN TO VEDRINE (ELYSEE) AND PETIT (MATIGNON) ABOUT GORBACHEV'S PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH MITTERRAND AND ROCARD. MORE DETAIL MAY EMERGE OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS, AND NO DOUBT MITTERRAND AND DUMAS WILL GIVE IMPRESSIONS AT NEXT WEEK'S PARIS MEETINGS. THE FOLLOWING SUMMARISES THE MAIN POINTS OF SUBSTANCE IN THE TALKS. DETAILS OF PROGRAMME, BILATERAL AGREEMENTS AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOVIET TEAM BY BAG TODAY TO SOVIET DEPARTMENT AND MOSCOW.

## ATMOSPHERE

4. FRENCH OFFICIALS ARE NOT WORRIED BY THE SCEPTICAL TONE OF THE FRENCH AND INTERNATIONAL REPORTING ON THE VISIT. THEY DID NOT EXPECT OR WANT IT TO MATCH THE VISIT TO BONN IN TERMS OF PUBLIC RESPONSE. THEY SAY THAT THE PERSONAL RAPPORT BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS HAD BEEN EXCELLENT. CONTRARY TO THE IMPRESSION GIVEN BY THE PRESS, GORBACHEV HIMSELF HAD BEEN VERY MUCH ON FORM AND SURE OF HIMSELF IN THE PRIVATE TALKS, MORE SO THAN WHEN MITTERRAND WENT TO MOSCOW LAST NOVEMBER. GORBACHEV WAS KEEN FROM THE START TO TAKE UP A FULL AGENDA OF BUSINESS: THE TWO WERE IN EACH OTHER'S COMPANY FOR MANY HOURS.

## BILATERAL RELATIONS

5. THE FRENCH SUCCEEDED IN ESTABLISHING A FIRMER STRUCTURE FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL SPHERES. THEY BELIEVE THEY HAVE SET AN AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE WHICH WILL CARRY A GOOD DEAL OF BUSINESS, IN ALL SENSES. SOME OF THE AGREEMENTS UPDATED ARRANGEMENTS THAT HAD BEEN RUNNING SINCE THE 1960S: OTHERS ARE NEW FOR FRANCE (HIGH DEFINITION TV, FORESTS, YOUTH EXCHANGES, DRUGS, INCIDENTS AT SEA, ARCHIVES ETC). VEDRINE PICKED OUT THE AGREEMENT ON MANAGEMENT TRAINING AS THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL THE 22 IN THE EYES OF THE ELYSEE, BECAUSE OF ITS EVENTUAL IMPACT ON ECONOMIC REFORM AND ATTITUDES. THIS MAY BE AN INDICATION THAT FRENCH HOPES OF A MARKED INCREASE IN COMMERCIAL BUSINESS, AT WHICH BLOT HINTED, DO NOT EXTEND VERY FAR. WE ARE NEVERTHELESS LIKELY TO SEE AN INCREASE IN NUMBER AND RANGE OF FRANCO-SOVIET JOINT ENTERPRISES.

## THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

6. THIS WAS THE MAIN PUBLIC THEME OF THE VISIT, SET OUT MOST FULLY IN GORBACHEV'S SPEECH IN STRASBOURG (UKDEL STRASBOURG TELNO 48). IN THE FRENCH VIEW, THE NEW SOVIET APPROACH WAS MORE BALANCED THAN IN THE PAST, WHEN SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL ISSUES HAD BEEN GIVEN BY FAR THE GREATEST WEIGHT. THERE WAS NOW A BETTER EMPHASIS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ON HUMANITARIAN ISSUES. THE FRENCH NOTE THE REFERENCES BY GORBACHEV TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND PEOPLES' RIGHT TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN WAY (CF IN PARTICULAR THE APPARENT RENUNCIATION OF THE BREZHNEV DOCTRINE IN THE STRASBOURG SPEECH). THIS WAS INTERPRETED BY GERASIMOV AT ONE PRESS CONFERENCE AS AMOUNTING TO A STATEMENT THAT THERE WERE NO CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE SOVIET UNION WOULD INVADE EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO PREVENT POLITICAL CHANGE. BUT THERE WERE SOME QUALIFICATIONS: GORBACHEV REPEATED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT THE PROCESS OF CHANGE MUST NOT LEAD TO DESTABILISATION, AND THAT ACCOUNT MUST BE TAKEN OF THE NEED FOR PEOPLES TO CO-EXIST. HE ALSO REFERRED IMPLICITLY TO THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF EASTERN EUROPE.

7. IN HIS TALKS WITH MITTERRAND GORBACHEV HAD SHOWN NO CONCERN ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN POLAND AND HUNGARY. IMMENSE CHANGES WERE UNDER WAY WHICH THE SOVIET UNION WELCOMED AND ENCOURAGED. BUT HE HAD SEVERAL TIMES SAID THAT THE WEST MUST KEEP A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY IN RELATION TO THESE DEVELOPMENTS AND NOT EXPLOIT THEM.

8. GORBACHEV IN PRIVATE AND PUBLICLY PURSUED THE IDEA OF A PAN-EUROPEAN SUMMIT. THE FRENCH SAID THAT THEY WERE NOT HOSTILE TO

THE IDEA, SO LONG AS IT MARKED PROGRESS IN ALL THE VARIOUS HELSINKI BASKETS AND WAS NOT JUST A GESTURE.

#### SOVIET INTERNAL

9. ACCORDING TO VEDRINE, GORBACHEV SPOKE FRANKLY WITH MITTERRAND OF THE GREAT DIFFICULTIES HE FACED. HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS APPROACHING THEM IN A DETERMINED AND POSITIVE WAY. THE SOVIET SIDE WAS PLEASED WITH MITTERRAND'S STRONG PUBLIC REFERENCES TO THE NEED FOR THE WEST TO SUPPORT PERESTROIKA.

#### US POLICY

10. GORBACHEV TOLD BOTH MITTERRAND AND ROCARD EMPHATICALLY OF HIS CONCERN ABOUT THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION THEIR INTENTIONS AND THEIR ALLEGED SLOWNESS IN GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THE ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS. THE SOVIET UNION COULD ONLY HOPE THAT THIS SLOWNESS DID NOT INDICATE A WISH TO INCREASE GORBACHEV'S INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES. GORBACHEV SAID THAT HE KNEW BUSH WELL AND HAD A GOOD PERSONAL RAPPORT WITH HIM: HE HOPED TO MEET HIM SOON. BUT HE WAS UNCERTAIN HOW AMERICAN POLICY WOULD DEVELOP. HE HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY UNHAPPY ABOUT BUSH'S SUGGESTION THAT SOVIET TROOPS SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM POLAND. GORBACHEV HAD ALSO REACTED FIERCELY TO THE SUGGESTION THAT EUROPE MIGHT EVENTUALLY RETURN TO THE 1939 FRONTIERS: HE WOULD NOT ACCEPT ANYTHING THAT PUT THE STATUS QUO IN QUESTION. THE POSITION OF THE TWO GERMANIES COULD NOT BE TOUCHED FOR THE TIME BEING. A CERTAIN EVOLUTION WAS POSSIBLE EVEN WITHIN THESE LIMITS, SO LONG AS IT DID NOT AMOUNT TO DESTABILISATION. (JIM HOAGLAND'S PIECE IN THE HERALD TRIBUNE OF 6 JULY, BASED ON ELYSEE BRIEFING, GIVES A GOOD ACCOUNT OF THE FRENCH VIEW OF EAST-WEST ASPECTS OF THE PRIVATE TALKS.)

#### ARMS CONTROL

11. THE FRENCH REGARD GORBACHEV'S REFERENCE IN HIS ELYSEE BANQUET SPEECH ON 4 JULY (VIZ TO TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS BECOMING A BRAKE ON THE DISARMAMENT PROCESS) AS THE MINIMUM HE COULD HAVE SAID. GORBACHEV HAD RAISED WITH THE PRESIDENT, BUT NOT PRESSED, THE QUESTION OF BRINGING FRENCH (AND BRITISH) NUCLEAR WEAPONS INTO THE ARMS CONTROL PROCESS. (HE HAD SAID MERELY THAT THERE MIGHT COME A TIME, LATER IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, WHEN FRENCH AND BRITISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS WOULD HAVE TO BE INCLUDED.) MITTERRAND HAD RE-STATED THE STANDARD FRENCH POSITION. THE SOVIET DEFENCE TEAM IN TALKS WITH THE FRENCH DEFENCE MINISTER PRESSED MUCH HARDER ON SNF AND INVOLVEMENT OF FRENCH NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN ARMS CONTROL.

12. BLOT COMMENTED THAT THE EXCHANGE BETWEEN MILITARY STAFFS HAD



BEEN USEFUL AND INTERESTING: THE FRENCH HAD EXPLAINED CLEARLY THEIR DOCTRINE THAT TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS WERE NOT SIMPLY A PART OF THE FRENCH ARMOURY, BUT HAD A SPECIFIC ROLE AS A WARNING BEFORE FRENCH STRATEGIC WEAPONS WERE USED. THE FRENCH CLAIM THAT THE RUSSIAN SIDE SEEMED NOT TO HAVE RECOGNISED BEFORE THAT THEIR OWN DOCTRINE WAS IN CONTRAST.

## CHINA

13. GORBACHEV HAD APPEARED EMBARRASSED ABOUT CHINA AND UNWILLING TO SAY MORE THAN A MINIMUM IN PUBLIC (JOURNALISTS REPORTED WIDELY GORBACHEV'S NERVOUSNESS ON THIS SUBJECT). IN PRIVATE HE HAD MADE CLEAR THAT HE WAS ABSOLUTELY AGAINST WHAT HAD HAPPENED. BUT HE CLEARLY DID NOT WISH, BY SAYING TOO MUCH IN PUBLIC, TO UNDO ANY OF THE DIFFICULT WORK ACHIEVED IN RESTORING AND IMPROVING SOVIET-CHINESE RELATIONS.

## INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS

14. THE SOVIET SIDE, IN PRIVATE, INCLUDING THE MILITARY, ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN HAD BEEN A MISTAKE. THEY STARTLED THE FRENCH BY TRYING TO DRAW A COMPARISON WITH FRANCE/ALGERIA. ON CAMBODIA, THE TWO SIDES AGREED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO RESPOND QUICKLY TO THE VIETNAMESE TROOP WITHDRAWAL AND TO PREPARE INTERNATIONAL CONTROL MEASURES IN ADVANCE. THE SOVIET UNION WOULD COME TO THE PARIS CONFERENCE AND PLAY A FULL PART (BUT THEY DO NOT SEEM TO HAVE SPECIFIED THEIR LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION). THEY WERE OPTIMISTIC THAT THE CHINESE WOULD PLAY A POSITIVE AND RESPONSIBLE ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON CAMBODIA. ON ARAB-ISRAEL, THE ANALYSIS OF THE TWO SIDES WAS VERY CLOSE (THOUGH, BLONTEAU SAID, NOT IDENTICAL). THEY AGREED ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PALESTINIAN INVOLVEMENT IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. MY TELNO 889 (NOT TO ALL) REPORTS SEPARATELY ON THE FRANCO-SOVIET DECLARATION ON LEBANON: THE SOVIET SIDE WERE CAREFUL NOT TO MAKE A LINK BETWEEN THE LEBANESE SITUATION AND THE WIDER MIDDLE EAST ISSUES, WHEREAS THE FRENCH WERE CONCERNED TO ENSURE THAT LEBANON DID NOT BECOME LOST AS A MINOR PART OF WIDER ISSUES - HENCE THE IMPORTANCE THEY PLACED ON A RE-AFFIRMATION OF LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY.

## COMMENT

15. THE VISIT CAN BE RATED AS SATISFACTORY FOR THE FRENCH IN ITS PRIVATE ASPECTS - THOUGH HOW MUCH OF THE DETAIL OF MITTERRAND'S TETE-A-TETE CONVERSATIONS WILL FILTER DOWN THROUGH THE MACHINE IS VERY UNCERTAIN. THE FRENCH CAN BE SATISFIED THAT THEY HAVE CAUGHT UP WITH GORBACHEV, AND THAT THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SHOW THAT THEY HAVE A COHERENT VIEWPOINT TO TRANSMIT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPE.



PUBLIC OPINION REMAINED INTERESTED BUT DETACHED, AND THE PARIS PRESS WERE NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT GORBACHEV'S PERFORMANCE. THE MITTERRAND-GORBACHEV CHEMISTRY WAS GOOD AND THE BILATERAL SHOP-WINDOW NOW HAS A NICE NEW DISPLAY.

16. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE TALKS, AS SO FAR REVEALED TO US, REVEALS INTERESTING GLOSSES ON SOVIET EUROPEAN POLICY AND GORBACHEV'S VIEW OF THE US. THE FRENCH INTERPRET GORBACHEV'S REPEATED WARNINGS ABOUT THE US EXPLOITING DEVELOPMENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE AS BETRAYING CONCERN THAT HIS OPPONENTS AT HOME COULD USE SUCH ATTEMPTS AGAINST HIM. THEY SEE SOVIET SECURITY AND CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP OF THE WARSAW PACT AS THE LAST REMAINING LIMITS ON POLITICAL EVOLUTION IN EASTERN EUROPE, AND SYMPATHISE WITH GORBACHEV'S VIEW THAT THE WEST MUST BE VERY CAREFUL - AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND - IN ITS APPROACH.

17. THE STRABSOURG SPEECH WILL REPLY STUDY, PARTICULARLY FOR WHAT IT REVEALS OF SOVIET ATTITUDES TO EASTERN EUROPE, AND THE BREZHNEV DOCTRINE.

18. THERE WAS NEVER ANY QUESTION OF THIS VISIT MATCHING IN IMPORTANCE GORBACHEV'S VISIT TO BONN. THE FRANCO-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP IS LESS VOLATILE THAN THAT OF GERMANY WITH THE SOVIET UNION. SINCE DE GAULLE'S TIME IT HAS BECOME MORE QUOTE NORMAL UNQUOTE. THE FRENCH TEMPTATION TO POINT-SCORING AS SHOWN IN DUMAS'S MISTAKEN CLAIM TO A PRIVILEGED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION GOES ALONG WITH A HEALTHY STREAK OF PUBLIC AND OFFICIAL SCEPTICISM. GORBOPHORIA DOES NOT RULE HERE.

FERGUSSON

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