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DESKBY F C O 291300Z SEPTEMBER

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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1094 OF 29 SEPTEMBER

INFO FLASH WASHINGTON (FOR PRIME MINISTER'S AND SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTIES).

INFO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK AND UKDEL NATO

INFO PRIORITY OTHER NATO POSTS, SOFIA, BELGRADE, BUCHAREST, BUDAPEST, EAST BERLIN , WARSAW AND PRAGUE.

INFO ROUTINE PEKING , TOKYO AND HELSINKI

MY TELNO 1091 : ANDROPOV ON U S FOREIGN POLICY.

1. THIS LENGTHY STATEMENT ONCE AGAIN SHOWS ANDROPOV'S SKILL, DESPITE THE APPARENT AVERSION TO PERSONAL PUBLICITY AND RESPECT FOR THE PROPRIETIES OF COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP, IN REACHING FOR THE WORLD HEADLINES. IT IS INTENDED TO BE READ AS THE MOST AUTHORITY AND SOLEMN REFLECTION POSSIBLE OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP'S VIEWS.
2. AS SUCH, IT ENDORSES , ALBEIT SHORN OF SOME OF THE HYPERBOLE, A BLEAK AND ANGRY VIEW OF THE U S ADMINISTRATION WHICH HAS, FOR SOME TIME, BEEN THE COMMON CURRENCY OF SOVIET PROPAGANDA AND WHICH I DESCRIBED IN MY TELNO 1077. WHY DID ANDROPOV FIND IT NECESSARY TO SIGNAL TO THE SOVIET PEOPLE AND THE REST OF THE WORLD THAT RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES HAD PLUMBED NEW DEPTHS, WITHOUT HOLDING OUT ANY HOPE OF A POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT ?
3. THE STATEMENT SERVES SEVERAL PURPOSES, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL. IT IS A RESPONSE TO PRONOUNCEMENTS BY PRESIDENT REAGAN WHICH HAVE STUCK IN THE SOVIET GULLET : MOST RECENTLY HIS VOICE OF AMERICA BROADCAST AND HIS SPEECH TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (MY TELNO 1088). THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP MUST HAVE DECIDED THAT REAGAN COULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE INDEFINITELY TO PRONOUNCE ON THE SOVIET UNION WITHOUT A RESPONSE AT AN EQUIVALENT LEVEL. THE SOVIET PUBLIC, WHO HAVE READ ALMOST DAILY ACCOUNTS OF REAGAN'S ALLEGEDLY MENDACIOUS AND HYPOCRITICAL ATTACKS ON THE SOVIET UNION, WILL BE GLAD TO SEE THAT ANDROPOV HAS RETURNED THE FIRE, NOT SPARING REAGAN PERSONALLY.

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4. THE STATEMENT ALSO SEEKS TO FILL BOTH THE PHYSICAL GAP IN SOVIET PROPAGANDA DEFENCES CAUSED BY GROMYKO'S ABSENCE FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE MORAL GAP CAUSED BY THE SOVIET DESTRUCTION OF THE KOREAN AIRLINER. ANDROPOV HAS TRIED TO TURN THE TABLES ON REAGAN AND CONVINCED THE WORLD THAT, ON THE CONTRARY, IT IS THE U S WHICH IS THE AGENT OF UNIVERSAL INSTABILITY, INJUSTICE AND TENSION. THE STATEMENT CONTAINS THE FULL CATALOGUE OF AMERICAN SINS AS THE SOVIET UNION SEES THEM. IT IS A MIRROR-IMAGE OF THE CHARGES LAID AGAINST MOSCOW BY WASHINGTON.

5. ANDROPOV TRIES HARD NOT TO SOUND BELLIGERENT. THE STATEMENT HAS BEEN DRAFTED VERY MUCH WITH THE "PEACE PROGRAMME" IN MIND. THOUGH THE GRAVITY WITH WHICH THE SOVIET UNION WILL REGARD THE DEPLOYMENT OF PERSHING AND CRUISE IS UNAMBIGUOUS, THERE IS NO REFERENCE IN TERMS TO COUNTER-MEASURES. THE SOVIET UNION'S DEFENCE CAPABILITIES ARE MENTIONED BRIEFLY AND UNDRAMATICALLY WITHOUT REPETITION OF EARLIER REFERENCES TO "CRUSHING RETALIATORY BLOWS". THE ONLY OVERT HINT OF MENACE LIES IN THE REMARK ABOUT WASHINGTON NOT KNOWING HOW TO PREVENT ITSELF FROM "CROSSING THE MARK BEFORE WHICH ANY SOBER-MINDED PERSON MUST STOP". YET THERE IS AN UNDERLYING SENSE OF ACUTE EXASPERATION, FRUSTRATION, AND POSSIBLY EVEN ALARM: ONE PICTURES ALMOST THE ANIMAL AT BAY.

6. THOUGH THEY ARE MENTIONED IN UNCOMPROMISING TERMS THE STATEMENT IS NOT ABOUT ARMS CONTROL AND THE KAL AIRLINER AS SUCH. I DO NOT BELIEVE, AS DO SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES, THAT ANDROPOV HAS BEEN PUSHED BY THE MILITARY INTO SAYING WHAT HE HAD SAID. THE STATEMENT IS ABOUT EAST/WEST RELATIONS GENERALLY. IT IS THE PRODUCT OF VISCERAL NATIONALISM AND A DEEP SENSE OF INJURY BROUGHT ON BY A PERCEPTION OF HOSTILE AMERICAN POLICIES WORLD-WIDE ON THE IDEOLOGICAL, POLITICAL AND MILITARY FRONTS. RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, THE RUSSIANS FEEL THAT THEY HAVE BEEN GOADED ALMOST BEYOND ENDURANCE BY THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION.

7. THE PROPAGANDA WAR BETWEEN MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON HAS NOW BEEN ESCALATED TO THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL, WITH ANDROPOV'S STATEMENT MARKING A QUALITATIVE ADVANCE ON THE SITUATION REPORTED IN MY TELNO 1077. WE MUST BE VERY NEAR A SITUATION WHERE PROPAGANDA HAS DEVoured POLICY. ANDROPOV'S STATEMENT IS, FRANKLY, PROFOUNDLY DISTURBING. WHAT IS NOW NEEDED IS THE APPLICATION OF COOL HEADS IN WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW TO A CALM POLITICAL DIALOGUE WORTHY OF TWO SUPER-POWERS WHO LAY CLAIM TO WORLD LEADERSHIP.

RATFORD.

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(Repetition to REYKJAVIK
referred for departmental decision,
repeated as requested to other posts.)