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DD 212300Z TOKYO
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CONFIDENTIAL
FM MOSCOW
TO DESKBY 212300Z TOKYO
TELNO MISC 264
OF 211444Z SEPTEMBER 89
AND TO IMMEDIATE FCO

FOR PM'S PARTY

PM'S VISIT: GORBACHEV'S OBJECTIVES.

1. GORBACHEV HAS JUST LAUNCHED ON AN INTENSE BURST OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL ACTIVITY AS PERESTROIKA NEARS ITS CRISIS (MY MIFT). IT IS A MEASURE OF THE IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PM THAT HE HAS NEVERTHELESS MADE TIME FOR A SUBSTANTIAL EXCHANGE WITH HER IN THE VERY BRIEF INTERVAL BETWEEN HIS PARTY PLENUM AND THE OPENING OF THE AUTUMN SUPREME SOVIET, BOTH OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE FOR THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY AND OF HIMSELF.
2. GORBACHEV'S FOREIGN POLICY IS THE ONE UNDOUBTED ACHIEVEMENT OF PERESTROIKA SO FAR. MOST PEOPLE HERE SEE A DIRECT CONNECTION BETWEEN TENSION ABROAD AND REPRESSION AT HOME. GORBACHEV HAS REASSURED THEM BY DEMONSTRATING THAT HE CAN DEVELOP A STRONG AND CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP EVEN WITH SUCH A CLEAR-SIGHTED CRITIC OF THE COMMUNIST SYSTEM AS MRS THATCHER. HER HOLD ON PEOPLE'S IMAGINATION HERE HAS OF COURSE BEEN REINFORCED BY THEIR GROWING BELIEF THAT HER CRITICISM IS ENTIRELY JUSTIFIED.
3. WESTERN UNDERSTANDING AND SYMPATHY FOR PERESTROIKA IS THEREFORE POLITICALLY IMPORTANT FOR GORBACHEV. IN HIS SPEECH AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S DINNER IN APRIL HE SHOWED HOW SENSITIVE HE WAS TO THE SCEPTICAL PRONOUNCEMENTS OF KISSINGER AND OTHERS (THE "CERTAIN CIRCLES IN THE WEST" TO WHICH HE DARKLY REFERRED ON THAT OCCASION). OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPOSE HIS COLLEAGUES TO THE REALITIES OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO HIM: CHERNYAYEV, HIS DIPLOMATIC ADVISER, TOLD ME IN THE SUMMER THAT HE PARTICULARLY WELCOMED THE ATTENTION WE WERE PAYING TO GENERAL YAZOV, THE DEFENCE MINISTER, AT A TIME WHEN THE ARMY'S POSITION WAS OF INCREASING POLITICAL DELICACY.
4. IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THAT ONE SHOULD SEE RUSSIAN SUSPICIONS THAT OUR EXPULSION OF SOVIET INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS IN MAY WAS MOTIVATED BY POLITICAL RATHER THAN SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS. THIS BIZARRE INTERPRETATION WAS NO DOUBT DELIBERATELY PROMOTED BY ILL-WISHERS, IN PART PERHAPS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT GORBACHEV'S INVESTMENT IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PM HAD FAILED TO PAY OFF. BUT EVEN SOME PEOPLE IN GORBACHEV'S ENTOURAGE SEEM NOT TO HAVE BEEN IMMUNE TO SUSPICION. GORBACHEV'S SENSIBLE REACTION WAS TO INSIST ON "BUSINESS AS USUAL" IN ANGLO-SOVIET RELATIONS.
5. BUT - AS CHERNYAYEV HINTED TO ME ON MONDAY - IT NEVERTHELESS SEEMS PROBABLE THAT ONE OF GORBACHEV'S MAIN OBJECTIVES AT SATURDAY'S MEETING WILL BE TO FORM A JUDGEMENT (PERHAPS WITHOUT RAISING THE MATTER EXPLICITLY) AS TO WHETHER THE EXPULSIONS DID REFLECT ANY CHANGE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S UNDERLYING ATTITUDE TO HIMSELF AND HIS POLICIES: AND IF POSSIBLE TO SECURE A PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION OF HER CONTINUED SUPPORT WHICH WILL SERVE HIM DOMESTICALLY.
6. THIS SUGGESTS THAT HE WILL WANT TO SPEND A GOOD DEAL OF THE TIME CONVINCING THE PRIME MINISTER THAT HE HAS THE POLICIES TO MASTER HIS PRESENT PROBLEMS. AS PRIMAKOV (NOW PROMOTED TO CANDIDATE MEMBERSHIP OF THE POLITBURO) TOLD THE PM AT THE AIRPORT, HE WILL ALSO WANT TO HAVE A WIDERANGING DISCUSSION OF INTERNATIONAL ISSUES RANGING FROM ARMS CONTROL TO REGIONAL ISSUES. BUT HIS MOST IMMEDIATE INTERNATIONAL PREOCCUPATION, NOT LEAST BECAUSE OF ITS OBVIOUS LINKS WITH HIS DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES, MAY WELL BE THE GROWING DISARRAY IN HIS EAST EUROPEAN EMPIRE. HIS HITHERTO TOLERANT ATTITUDE TO CHANGE THERE MUST BE TESTED BY THE POSSIBILITY THAT NEITHER OF THE TWO GERMANY'S WILL REMAIN CONTENT MUCH LONGER WITH THE POST-WAR SETTLEMENT ON WHICH RUSSIA'S POSITION IN CENTRAL EUROPE DEPENDS. THIS IS NOT A MATTER ON WHICH GORBACHEV HAS SHOWN ANY DISPOSITION TO SPECULATE IN PUBLIC: NO DOUBT BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING IN PRESENT SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS THE GERMAN PROBLEM WHICH COULD COPE WITH THE UNCERTAINTIES INVOLVED. HE MIGHT BE MORE FORTHCOMING IN THE INTIMACY OF HIS EXCHANGES WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

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