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LITHUANIA: DEPUTY'S VIEWS
SUMMARY

1. SAJUDIS PEOPLE'S DEPUTY NIKOLAI MEDVEDEV GLOOMY ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR DIALOGUE WITH MOSCOW. FEARS LOSS OF INFLUENCE WITH RECALL OF ALL LITHUANIAN DEPUTIES FROM MOSCOW. EXPRESSES STRONG SUPPORT FOR PRIME MINISTER'S LINE. HOPES UK USE INFLUENCE TO ENCOURAGE DIALOGUE

DETAIL

2. A MEMBER OF CHANCERY BUMPED IN TO LITHUANIAN DEPUTY NIKOLAI MEDVEDEV AT THE SUPREME SOVIET ON 28 MARCH. MEDVEDEV IS THE ONLY ETHNIC RUSSIAN AMONGST THE RADICAL LITHUANIAN DEPUTIES. HE IS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE LITHUANIAN SUPREME COUNCIL. HE IS ONE OF THE THREE LITHUANIAN DEPUTIES TO HAVE CONTINUED TO WORK IN MOSCOW AFTER THE LITHUANIAN SUPREME COUNCIL'S DECISION TO WITHDRAW THEIR MANDATES AND INSTRUCT THEM TO ADOPT OBSERVER STATUS. AFTER THE INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION IT WAS HOPED THAT THESE DEPUTIES MIGHT FORM THE CORE OF A NEGOTIATING TEAM BUT THEY NOW HAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO RETURN TO LITHUANIA.

3. MEDVEDEV OPPOSED THE DECISION TO RECALL ALL LITHUANIAN REPRESENTATIVES. HE IS WORRIED THAT THE LITHUANIAN LEADERSHIP WILL BECOME EVEN MORE OUT OF TOUCH WITH EVENTS AND THINKING IN MOSCOW AND THAT IT WILL BE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO PERSUADE MOSCOW TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS. FROM HIS OWN POINT OF VIEW, HE WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT THE LITHUANIANS WOULD LOSE THE ADVANTAGE OF ANY MODEST INFLUENCE HE MIGHT HAVE WITH THE MOSCOW LEADERSHIP - THE NEW PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL FOR EXAMPLE. ANTANAITIS AND OTHER DEPUTIES HAD ALSO DISAGREED WITH THE VILNIUS DIRECTIVE TO RETURN.

4. MEDVEDEV THOUGHT THAT THE LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION HAD BEEN BADLY TIMED. ALL MIGHT HAVE BEEN WELL IF CIVILISED DISCUSSION HAD ENSUED. LANDSBERGIS WAS A REASONABLE AND MEASURED MAN BUT THE UNREASONABLE USE OF MILITARY FORCE HAD ENCOURAGED THE LITHUANIANS TO REACT PRECIPITATELY. THE SITUATION COULD HAVE BEEN HANDLED BETTER THROUGH CIVIL AUTHORITIES. GORBACHEV CONTINUED TO REFUSE TO TALK TO THE LITHUANIANS.

UK REACTION

4. MEDVEDEV PRAISED THE PRIME MINISTER'S 27 MARCH BALANCED RESPONSE TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS ON LITHUANIA AND EXPRESSED A WISH THAT SHE MIGHT USE HER INFLUENCE TO DISSUADE GORBACHEV FROM LETTING THE CONFLICT ESCALATE. MEDVEDEV IS GRAVELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE EFFECT OF THE SOVIET/LITHUANIAN DISPUTE ON THE POLITICAL PROCESSES IN THE SOVIET UNION. HE FEARS THAT AS A MINIMUM, THE LITHUANIANS MAY BE SPOILING THE PROSPECTS FOR THEIR BALTIC NEIGHBOURS: AT WORST THAT A WORSENING LITHUANIAN DISPUTE COULD BE THE TRIGGER FORMORE WIDESPREAD DISTURBANCES OR EVEN CIVIL WAR. HE WAS ALSO ALARMED BY THE POSSIBILITY OF EAST-WEST RELATOINS BEING ADVERSELYAFFECTED.

5. HE CAUTIONED AGAINST HASTY RECOGNITION BY THE WEST OF LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE

COMMENT

6. MEDVEDEV HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT FIGURE IN THE LITHUANIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT AND HAS ATTRACTED PARTICULAR ATTENTION AS THE

TOKEN RUSSIAN IN THE SAJUDIS LEADERSHIP. HE HAS PERFORMED WELL IN THE SUPREME SOVIET AND SEEMS A GENERALLY SENSIBLE INTERLOCUTOR, IF INCLINED TO APOCALYPTIC PROGNOSIS. HE WAS CLEARLY EXPRESSING HIS OWN OPINIONS RATHER THAN A SAJUDIS PARTY LINE AND HIS VIEWS ON WHAT THE WEST SHOULD DO FOR LITHUANIA ARE MORE PRAGMATIC THAN THOSE OF OTHER SAJUDIS CONTACTS. BUT IT IS INTERESTING THAT OTHER LITHUANIAN CONTACTS INCLUDING PEOPLE'S DEPUTY CEKUOLIS HAVE ALSO TOLD US OF THEIR MISGIVINGS OVER THE TIMING OF THE LITHUANIAN ACTION.

7. WE HOPE TO CONTACT MEDVEDEV INFORMALLY AGAIN BEFORE HE LEAVES MOSCOW NEXT WEEK

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