

GRS 387

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DESKBY 091500Z

FM MOSCOW 091333Z MAY 84

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 586 OF 9 MAY

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, LOS ANGELES:

INFO ROUTINE EAST EUROPEAN POSTS, UKDEL NATO, PARIS, BONN

MYTEL NO 583 : OLYMPICS

1. THE SOVIET DECISION, WHICH IS MORE SURPRISING IN ITS TIMING THAN IN ITS SUBSTANCE, HAS PROBABLY BEEN PROMPTED BY A MIXTURE OF FACTORS INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

- I) DESIRE FOR REVENGE FOR THE AMERICAN-INFLICTED 'HUMILIATION' OVER THE 1980 MOSCOW OLYMPICS:
- II) THE CURRENT ABYSMAL STATE OF US/SOVIET RELATIONS:
- III) FEAR OF DEFECTIONS.

AS THE AMERICANS POINT OUT (WASHINGTON TELNO 1433), THEY HAD MET ALL SOVIET DEMANDS BAR ONE VISA, SO THE REASON CANNOT LIE IN THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH THE SOVIET TEAM WOULD HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE GAMES.

2. THE US CHARGE HERE SEES FEAR OF DEFECTIONS AS THE OVER-RIDING ELEMENT. A WEEK AGO THE AMERICANS HAD AN INDICATION FROM A DOCTOR ATTENDING THE SOVIET TEAM THAT USTINOV (DEFENCE MINISTER) AND CHEBRIKOV (HEAD OF KGB) WERE BOTH STRONGLY AGAINST PARTICIPATION, BUT WERE NOT AT THAT STAGE EXPECTED TO CARRY THE DAY. ZIMMERMANN SPECULATES THAT THE RECENT KOZLOV INCIDENT (WHERE A HAND-PICKED AND THOROUGHLY SCREENED INDIVIDUAL PROVED UNRELIABLE - WASHINGTON TELNO 1335), MAY HAVE GIVEN THEM A CONVENIENT HANDLE IN ARGUING THAT THERE COULD BE AN EMBARRASSING NUMBER OF DEFECTIONS. IN MY OWN VIEW THE DECISION MUST BE SEEN PRIMARILY AS YET ANOTHER EXPRESSION OF THE PURBLIND ANTI-AMERICANISM WHICH IS BEGINNING TO ASSUME THE PROPORTIONS OF AN OBSESSION WITH THE KREMLIN LEADERSHIP (CF MY TELNO 581).

3. DISCUSSION THIS MORNING AMONG HEADS OF MISSION OF THE US, FRG, FRANCE AND UK SHOWED CONSENSUS THAT THE SOVIET DECISION IS NOW ALMOST CERTAINLY IRREVERSIBLE, AND THAT GENSCHER IS LIKELY TO SUFFER A REBUFF IN HIS REPORTED INTENTION OF TRYING TO PERSUADE THE RUSSIANS TO RECONSIDER. THERE IS AT PRESENT INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO SHOW HOW FAR THE DECISION HAD BEEN CONCERTED IN ADVANCE WITH THE EAST EUROPEANS: PRESUMABLY, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ROUMANIA, THEY WILL FOLLOW SUIT. BUT IT WILL NOT BE A POPULAR DECISION ESPECIALLY IN THE DDR AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA. INDEED THE RUSSIANS SEEM LIKELY TO LOSE PROPAGANDA TRICKS ALL ROUND.

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