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FROM MOSCOW 101330Z MAY

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 591 OF 10 MAY

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, LOS ANGELES

INFO ROUTINE UKDEL NATO, BONN AND EASTERN EUROPEAN POSTS

MY TELNO 526 : OLYMPICS.

1. WITH NEARLY TWO DAYS HAVING ELAPSED SINCE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SOVIET DECISION, THE INDICATIONS ARE MULTIPLYING THAT THIS WAS A HIGH-LEVEL DECISION, POSSIBLY TAKEN AT SHORT NOTICE AND WITH LITTLE REFERENCE TO THE REST OF THE BLOC.

2. THE FACT THAT, SO FAR, THE EAST EUROPEANS HAVE BEEN SLOW TO FOLLOW SUIT, AND THE MEAGRE SCRAPINGS FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE BARREL IN TODAY'S SOVIET PRESS ACCOUNTS OF "SUPPORT" ELSEWHERE, SUGGEST STRONGLY THAT THE FOUNDATIONS HAD NOT BEEN LAID IN ADVANCE FOR AN IMMEDIATE AND CONCERTED CAMPAIGN. THE BULGARIAN ANNOUNCEMENT CAME TOO LATE FOR PUBLICATION IN TODAY'S PRAVDA AND THE ONLY EAST EUROPEAN REACTION INCLUDED IN ITS PRESS ROUND-UP IS A SOMEWHAT BLAND PAP COMMENTARY FROM WARSAW CONCLUDING WITH THE STATEMENT THAT THE SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES "RAISES DOUBTS" ABOUT POLISH PARTICIPATION IN THE OLYMPICS. I HAVE JUST HEARD THAT THE EAST GERMANS ARE WITHDRAWING.

3. A FURTHER CURIOUS FEATURE IS THAT THE DECISION WAS ANNOUNCED AFTER ONLY TWO DAYS OF A MODEST LETTER CAMPAIGN ON THE BACK PAGE OF IZVESTIA, IN WHICH READERS QUESTIONED THE WISDOM OF SOVIET ATHLETES GOING TO LOS ANGELES. USUALLY CAMPAIGNS OF THIS KIND ARE ALLOWED TO RUN AWHILE, WORKING UP TO AN APPROPRIATE CRESCENDO.

4. WHY DID THE RUSSIANS CHOOSE TO TAKE THE DECISION WHEN THEY DID, GIVEN THIS APPEARANCE OF UNCHARACTERISTIC DISSARAY? THEY STILL HAD ALMOST A MONTH BEFORE THE 2 JUNE DEADLINE TO PREPARE THE GROUND BETTER. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY ARE NOT SERIOUS AND THAT THEY WANT TO SEE THE AMERICANS EAT DIRT BEFORE PRODUCING THE ASSURANCES ALREADY GIVEN BY THE U S TO JUSTIFY CHANGING THEIR DECISION. BUT THIS IS UNLIKELY AND I THINK THE DECISION IRREVERSIBLE. AT THIS STAGE, I WOULD ADD TO THE SNAP JUDGEMENT IN MY TUR ONLY THE COMMENT THAT, ONCE AGAIN, THE EMOTIONAL, VISCERAL COMPONENT

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IN THE KREMLIN'S VIEW OF THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION HAS MUCH TO ANSWER FOR AND THAT THE 'INJURED GIANT' COMPLEX (MOSCOW TEL 311) HAS BEGUN TO ASSUME ALARMING PROPORTIONS. I WOULD NOT EXCLUDE THAT REAGAN'S TRIP TO CHINA HAS HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT, PARTICULARLY NOW THAT ARKHIPOV'S JOURNEY HAS BEEN POSTPONED (WE ARE TRYING TO ESTABLISH WHY). IN RETROSPECT IT SEEMS THAT SOME OF REAGAN'S STATEMENTS THERE CAUSED GREATER EXASPERATION IN MOSCOW THAN THEY ALLOWED TO FIND EXPRESSION AT THE TIME.

5. MEANWHILE, RICHARD BURT'S REPORTED REACTION ON AMERICAN TELEVISION TO THE SOVIET DECISION HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF A VICIOUS ATTACK IN THE ENGLISH SERVICE OF TASS WHICH, INTER ALIA, DREW ATTENTION TO BURT'S INTERVENTION IN THE KOZLOV CASE (CF NY TUR).

RATFORD

FCO (PALACE) WHITEHALL
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