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FM MOSCOW 171400Z MAR 82  
TO PRIORITY F C O  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 141 OF 17TH MARCH  
FOR INFO ROUTINE WASHINGTON PARIS BONN AND UKDEL NATO.

BREZHNEV'S SPEECH TO THE SOVIET TRADE UNION CONGRESS: M I P T.

1. THIS WAS BREZHNEV'S FIRST MAJOR SPEECH TO A SOVIET AUDIENCE SINCE THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR.
2. THE INFLUENCE OF EVENTS IN POLAND ON THE INTERNAL SECTION OF THE SPEECH IS CLEARLY DISCERNABLE. IN ADDITION TO THE STANDARD REFERENCES TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TRADE UNIONS' ROLE IN RAISING PRODUCTIVITY, THERE IS A STRONG EMPHASIS ON THE NEED FOR THEM TO MEET THEIR SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS TO THE WORKERS. WITHOUT ACTUALLY NAMING SOLIDARITY, BREZHNEV ALSO ATTACKED THE IDEA, FOSTERED BY "SOCIALISM'S ENEMIES", THAT TRADE UNIONS COULD OCCUPY A "NEUTRAL" POSITION IN SOCIETY, INDEPENDENT OF THE PARTY. ON ECONOMIC ISSUES THE REFERENCE TO "RADICAL SOLUTIONS" TO THE FOOD PROBLEM TO BE OUTLINED AT THE FORTHCOMING PLENUM ON AGRICULTURE WAS INTERESTING, AS WAS BREZHNEV'S ADMISSION OF THE PRESENT DIFFICULTIES OVER FOOD., BUT SO FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO INDICATION WHAT FORM THE NEW MEASURES MIGHT TAKE.
3. THE ARMS CONTROL PASSAGES (MY TELNO 136) ARE THE CENTRE PIECE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION WHICH IS NOTABLE FOR ITS TRENCHANT COMMENTS ON THE WEST AND PESSIMISTIC ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF EAST/WEST RELATIONS. BREZHNEV'S REFERENCE TO "COWBOY RAIDS" ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE LOOKS LIKE A PERSONAL GIBE AT PRESIDENT REAGAN.
4. THIS WAS A GOOD PUBLIC PERFORMANCE BY BREZHNEV WHO HAD BEEN REPORTED IN VERY POOR SHAPE LAST WEEK DURING KOIVISTO'S VISIT. HE SPOKE STANDING FOR ABOUT AN HOUR AND, DESPITE THE USUAL SLURRED DELIVERY, CAME OVER STRONGLY THROUGHOUT. HE WAS SEEN LATER IN THE DAY ATTENDING AN ICE HOCKEY MATCH.
5. ALL THE MOSCOW-BASED MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO WERE PRESENT, EXCEPT DEFENCE MINISTER USTINOV (VISITING INDIA) AND KIRILENKO WHO HAS NOT BEEN REPORTED AS APPEARING IN PUBLIC SINCE JARUZELSKI'S VISIT AT THE BEGINNING OF MARCH. THIS AND THE FACT THAT CHERNENKO OCCUPIED THE PLACE OF HONOUR ON BREZHNEV'S RIGHT IS LIKELY FURTHER TO FUEL SPECULATION OF A POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN CHERNENKO AND KIRILENKO.

KEEGLG .

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