

GR 1290
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 FM MOSCOW 281530Z OCT 82
 TO IMMEDIATE F C O
 TELEGRAM NUMBER 643 OF 28 OCTOBER
 INFO PRIORITY UKDEL NATO, WASHINGTON, PEKING, PARIS, BONN
 MODUK FOR D13
 SAVING FOR INFO ATHENS, BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN, DUBLIN, THE HAGUE,
 LUXEMBOURG, ROME, UKREP BRUSSELS, HANOI, TOKYO, UKMIS NEW YORK,
 UKMIS GENEVA, UKDEL VIENNA.

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Prime Minister:

Paragraphs
 8 and 9 are
interesting

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BREZHNEV SPEAKS TO THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES

1. ON 27 OCTOBER BREZHNEV ADDRESSED A CONFERENCE IN THE KREMLIN OF SENIOR OFFICERS. SPECIAL WEIGHT WAS GIVEN TO THE OCCASION BY THE PRESENCE OF THE FIVE POLITBURO MEMBERS WHO IN BREZHNEV'S TWILIGHT YEARS APPEAR TO CARRY THE MOST AUTHORITY: CHERNENKO, ANDROPOV, USTINOV, TIKHONOV AND GROMYKO.

2. THE SPEECH WAS LARGELY DEVOTED TO A POLEMICAL DENUNCIATION OF UNITED STATES' POLICIES: TO THE GROWING IMPORTANCE, AS A CONSEQUENCE, OF SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS; AND TO THE TASKS BEFORE THE ARMED FORCES. THE SPEECH IS AN IMPORTANT STATEMENT OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY, BUT ITS MAIN SIGNIFICANCE IN MY VIEW CONCERNS THE PARTY'S RELATIONS WITH THE ARMED FORCES. AS SUCH, IT IS AN UNUSUAL STATEMENT ON AN UNUSUAL OCCASION WHICH HAS AROUSED INTENSE SPECULATION HERE. MORE SPECIFICALLY, BREZHNEV'S AIMS SEEMED TO BE TO GIVE THE ARMED FORCES AN ACCOUNT OF WHAT THE PARTY AND THE GOVERNMENT WERE DOING TO DEAL WITH A PERCEIVED WORSENING IN THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION: TO REASSURE THEM OF THE LEADERSHIP'S FULL SUPPORT; AND, PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, TO JUSTIFY A POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH CHINA.

3. IN HIS INTRODUCTION, REFERRING TO BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MATTERS, BREZHNEV SAID THAT EVENTS SINCE THE 26TH CPSU CONGRESS HAD CONFIRMED THE CORRECTNESS OF THE CONCLUSIONS ADOPTED. BUT "THERE ALSO APPEAR NEW QUESTIONS WHICH MUST BE SOLVED WITHOUT DELAY".

4. THE MAIN POINTS ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS WERE :
 - A. THE INCREASINGLY COMPLICATED INTERNATIONAL SITUATION RESULTING FROM THE US POLITICAL, IDEOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC OFFENSIVE AGAINST SOCIALISM: FROM THE DEPLOYMENT OF THEIR MEDIUM-RANGE NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN EUROPE FOR WHICH "PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS WERE UNDER WEIGH": FROM ISRAEL'S AGGRESSION IN THE LEBANON:

 - B. THE UNITED STATES WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THESE AND OTHER COMPLICATIONS: "WASHINGTON'S AGGRESSIVE POLICY IS THREATENING TO PUSH THE WORLD INTO THE FLAMES OF A NUCLEAR WAR" AND "THE ADVENTURISM, RUDENESS AND UNDISGUISED EGOTISM" OF THIS POLICY WAS AROUSING GROWING INDIGNATION IN MANY COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE ALLIES OF THE UNITED STATES.

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C. IN THIS SITUATION THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WAS VERY IMPORTANT. 'OF NO SMALL IMPORTANCE ARE RELATIONS WITH CHINA'. THE SOVIET UNION SINCERELY WANTED A NORMALISATION OF RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND WAS DOING EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TOWARDS THAT END. THE CHINESE WERE NOW ALSO SAYING THAT NORMALISATION WAS DESIRABLE. NON 8:..(CAL CHANGES IN CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY WERE YET TO BE SEEN, BUT 'THE NEW THINGS WHICH APPEAR MUST NOT BE IGNORED BY US':

D. TWO LINES NOW CLASHED IN WORLD POLITICS : THE AMERICAN LINE FOR DEEPENING TENSION AND THE SOVIET LINE FOR DETENTE AND STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL SECURITY.

5. THE SECTION ON INTERNAL TASKS WAS SET IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE USSR (MY TEL NO 631) WHICH 'THE SOVIET HOMELAND WAS APPROACHING IN THE FLOWER OF ITS STRENGTH'. THERE WERE STILL SHORTCOMINGS - BOTTLENECKS IN METALS, FUEL AND TRANSPORT WERE CITED - AND CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION WAS ONLY IMPROVING SLOWLY BUT INDUSTRY COULD NOW PRODUCE EVERYTHING NECESSARY BY RELYING ALMOST ENTIRELY ON INDEPENDENT RESOURCES OF RAW AND OTHER MATERIALS. MUCH WAS BEING DONE TO ELIMINATE IN THE FUTURE THE NEED FOR GRAIN PURCHASES ABROAD.

6. IN THE PART OF HIS SPEECH DEVOTED TO THE TASKS OF THE ARMED FORCES, BREZHNEV NOTED SUCCESSES IN IMPROVING COMBAT-READINESS AND TRAINING AND TECHNICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL MEASURES WHICH HAD ADDED TO THEIR MIGHT. BUT 'PROCEEDING FROM THE GROWING REQUIREMENTS' 'THE LEVEL OF READINESS SHOULD BE EVEN HIGHER', SO THAT NO FORTUITY SHOULD TAKE THE SOVIET UNION UNAWARES. ADDRESSING HIMSELF TO SCIENTISTS, DESIGNERS AND ENGINEERS, BREZHNEV CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT COMPETITION IN MILITARY TECHNOLOGY HAD SHARPLY INTENSIFIED, OFTEN ACQUIRING A FUNDAMENTALLY NEW CHARACTER 'LAG IN THIS COMPETITION IS INADMISSIBLE.' AMONG SEVERAL REFERENCES TO THE PARTY'S CONCERN TO PROMOTE EFFICIENCY AND MODERNISATION THE MOST STRIKING WAS BREZHNEV'S STATEMENT THAT HE PERSONALLY CONCERNED HIMSELF CONSTANTLY WITH THE STRENGTHENING OF THE ARMY AND NAVY, AND 'I KNOW HOW THINGS ARE WITH YOU'.

7. THE CONFERENCE ON 27 OCTOBER, NOT A REGULAR EVENT, PROBABLY REPRESENTS A RESPONSE BY THE LEADERSHIP TO UNCERTAINTY IN THE ARMED FORCES ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THEM BOTH OF THE WORSENING INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND OF DOMESTIC ECONOMIC POLICIES. THIS MAY ALSO LIE BEHIND THE RECENT MILITARY CONFERENCE ON IDEOLOGY REPORTED IN DUNCAN'S LETTER OF 27 OCTOBER TO RESEARCH DEPARTMENT. THE ABSENCE, EVEN IN THE DEFENCE MINISTRY'S NEWSPAPER, OF ANY REPORTS OF OTHER SPEECHES SUGGESTS THAT DIFFICULT ISSUES WERE ADDRESSED. MOREOVER, BREZHNEV OPENED WITH A REFERENCE TO AN 'INVITATION' TO HIM FROM USTINOV TO MEET THE LEADERSHIP OF THE FORCES, A CURIOUSLY DEFERENTIAL GESTURE FROM ONE WHO IS HIMSELF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND HEAD OF THE DEFENCE COMMITTEE. THE PASSAGES IN BREZHNEV'S SPEECH WHERE HE ASSURES THEM THAT NOTHING WILL BE SPARED, WHETHER BY THE PEOPLE OR BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, TO ENSURE THAT ALL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ARMED

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FORCES WOULD BE MET ALSO SUGGEST AN APPEAL FOR THEIR LOYALTY AND SUPPORT. BY CONTRAST ELSEWHERE IN THE SPEECH THERE IS ONLY ONE REFERENCE TO THE FOOD PROGRAMME. THERE IS A STRONG INFERENCE THAT THERE MAY NEED FOR MORE GUNS AND LESS BUTTER.

8. THE OPENING TO CHINA, AND ITS POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR TROOP DEPLOYMENT IN THE FAR EAST, IS A MAJOR ASPECT OF POLICY WHICH WOULD REQUIRE CAREFUL EXPLANATION TO THE MILITARY WHO HAVE BEEN USED TO VIEWING THE CHINESE AS A MAJOR ADVERSARY. IN THE RELEVANT PASSAGE BREZHNEV NOT ONLY CONFIRMS THAT IT IS THE RUSSIANS WHO HAVE BEEN MAKING THE RUNNING WITH PEKING: NO PREVIOUS AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT OF WHICH I AM AWARE SO CLEARLY IMPLIES THAT THE SOVIET APPROACH (WHICH AS KAPTISA, THE MFA'S CHIEF CHINA-WATCHER, RECENTLY SUGGESTED WAS INITIATED IN A TENTATIVE WAY FOLLOWING THE DETERIORATION OF SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS OVER TAIWAN) IS NOW SEEN AS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE NEED TO COUNTER WHAT IS PERCEIVED AS AN INCREASINGLY HOSTILE UNITED STATES. BREZHNEV'S REMARKS INDICATE SOVIET SATISFACTION WITH THE RECENT FIRST ROUND OF TALKS WITH THE CHINESE.

9. THE HARSHNESS OF HIS COMMENTS ON THE US MAY BE PARTLY ACCOUNTED FOR BY THE NEED TO EXPLAIN THE POSSIBILITY OF AN IMPROVEMENT IN SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS. BUT EVEN ALLOWING FOR THE MILITARY AUDIENCE THE SHARPNESS OF THE ATTACK AND THE STRESS ON A HIGHER STATE OF ALERT AND MORE SOPHISTICATED ARMAMENTS ARE NOTEWORTHY. THE IMPLICATION IS OF A NEGATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROSPECTS FOR A CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AMERICANS, AT LEAST WITH THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION. THE FOCUS ON ECONOMIC AUTARCHY IS AN UNSPOKEN RIPOSTE TO US RESTRICTIONS ON EXPORTS. THERE IS A NOTABLE ABSENCE (APART FROM A PASSING REFERENCE TO EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE DANGER OF NUCLEAR WAR) OF ANY MENTION OF ARMS CONTROL. BY CONTRAST TO HIS RECENT SPEECH IN BAKU (MY TEL NO 556) THE REFERENCES TO DETENTE ARE PERFUNCTORY. THE REFERENCE TO "PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS" FOR INF DEPLOYMENT AS A FAIT ACCOMPLI MAY BE AN ECHO OF BREZHNEV'S TRADES UNION CONGRESS SPEECH IN MARCH IN WHICH HE ANNOUNCED A UNILATERAL MORATORIUM ON DEPLOYMENT OF SOVIET MEDIUM-RANGE MISSILES UNTIL AGREEMENT AT GENEVA OR UNTIL THE COMMENCEMENT BY THE US OF "PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS" FOR INF DEPLOYMENT (MOSCOW TEL NO 136).

FCO PLEASE PASS TO ALL SAVING ADDRESSEES.
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