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TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 706 OF 12 JULY
AND TO PRIORITY MOSCOW UKDEL NATO WASHINGTON
INFO SAVING PARIS

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NIPT: ANDROPOV'S HEALTH

A & C. $\frac{13}{7}$
h-a.

SUMMARY

1. THE IMPRESSION OF KOHL'S DELEGATION WAS THAT ANDROPOV HAS BAD PHYSICAL HEALTH, BUT IS MENTALLY ALERT AND POLITICALLY IN CHARGE. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY HOW LONG HE COULD REMAIN IN OFFICE. BUT HIS PHYSICAL WEAKNESS, AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF IT AMONG THE TOP PEOPLE IN MOSCOW, WOULD PROBABLY MEAN THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD AVOID DECISIONS WHICH WERE CONTROVERSIAL AMONG THE LEADERS.

DETAIL

2. CHANCELLOR KOHL'S DIPLOMATIC ADVISER, WHO ACCOMPANIED HIM TO MOSCOW, BRIEFED ME TODAY ON THE DELEGATION'S IMPRESSION OF ANDROPOV'S HEALTH.

3. THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT ANDROPOV WAS IN A POOR PHYSICAL CONDITION. HE HAD SOME DIFFICULTY IN WALKING, AND OFTEN REQUIRED SUPPORT WHILE STANDING OR GETTING UP FROM A CHAIR. HE LIKED TO KEEP HIS HANDS RESTING ON THE TABLE DURING THE TALKS, AND THEY SHOOK WHEN HE LIFTED THEM. HE WAS VERY PALE AND HIS FACE WAS PUFFY.

TIKHONOV TOLD KOHL THAT ANDROPOV'S ABSENCE ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE VISIT WAS CAUSED BY QUOTE RENAL COLIC UNQUOTE. IT WAS POSSIBLE, BUT ONLY SPECULATION, THAT HE HAD BEEN ON A DIALYSIS MACHINE THAT DAY.

4. TELTSCHIK SAID THAT ANDROPOV'S SPEECH WAS CLEAR. HE WAS MENTALLY IN TOP FORM AND PERFECTLY ABLE TO DISCUSS DIFFICULT SUBJECTS WITH KOHL WITHOUT NOTES. OTHER SOVIET LEADERS DEFERRED TO HIM, AND HE SEEMED TO BE VERY MUCH THE PRE-EMINENT FIGURE AMONG THE SOVIET LEADERS.

5. TELTSCHIK SAID THAT, WHILE ANDROPOV'S PHYSICAL STATE WAS POOR, THERE WAS NO KNOWING WHETHER HE WOULD LAST A MATTER OF WEEKS OR QUITE A FEW YEARS. HOWEVER, HIS WEAK HEALTH AND THE RISK THAT HE MIGHT NOT BE AROUND LONG, AND THE FACT THAT THE FIRST AT LEAST WAS WELL KNOWN AMONG THE SOVIET ESTABLISHMENT, WOULD PROBABLY BE AN INFLUENCE AGAINST RISK-TAKING IN SOVIET POLICIES. WHERE THE LEADERS WERE AGREED ON A MAJOR STEP IT MIGHT GO AHEAD: BUT WHERE THERE WERE DIFFERENCES, INACTION WOULD BE MORE LIKELY.

FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING ADDRESSEE.

MALLABY
STANDARD
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NAD

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

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