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TO IMMEDIATE F C O  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 678 OF 9 MAY  
INFO IMMEDIATE : WASHINGTON, PARIS, BONN, UKDEL NATO.

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Prime Minister  
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MY TELNO 673 : COMMEMORATION IN THE SOVIET UNION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY : CEREMONIES ON 9 MAY

1. I ATTENDED THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY PARADE THROUGH RED SQUARE THIS MORNING. IT OPENED WITH AN ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE, MARSHAL SOKOLOV. HIS SPEECH TO THE MASSES DRAWN UP ON THE SQUARE (DETAILS OF WHICH I AM REPORTING SEPARATELY) WAS, FOR THE MOST PART, AN EULOGY OF SOVIET MILITARY ACHIEVEMENTS. HE SPOKE OF THE VICTORY 40 YEARS AGO IN WHICH THE SOVIET UNION HAD STRUCK THE DECISIVE BLOW IN THE "DEFENCE OF CIVILISATION" AND READINESS TO DEFEND THE MOTHERLAND AND THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SOCIALISM TODAY. HE BRIEFLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE ROLE OF OTHER FORCES, PLACING THE PARTISANS IN EUROPE AHEAD OF THE WARTIME ALLIES, AND CONCLUDING WITH REFERENCES TO THE WARSAW PACT AND EAST-WEST RELATIONS. THERE WAS NOTHING EXPLICITLY ANTI-AMERICAN. THERE WERE NO OTHER SPEECHES. GORBACHEV, TIKHONOV AND GROMYKO TOOK CENTRE STAGE ON THE LENIN MAUSOLEUM. mr

2. THE MILITARY PARADE, LAUNCHED WITH A FORTY GUN SALUTE, WAS LARGER AND MORE IMPRESSIVE THAN THE CUSTOMARY ANNUAL PARADE IN NOVEMBER. THE MARCH-PAST INCLUDED, IN ADDITION TO FORMATIONS OF SOVIET TROOPS, PHALANXES OF VETERANS AND PARTISANS, WITH GROUPS FROM POLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THE DRIVE-PAST WAS HEADED BY SECOND WORLD WAR T34 TANKS AND OTHER 40-YEAR-OLD EQUIPMENT. THERE WERE SEVERAL PIECES OF MODERN WEAPONRY NOT PREVIOUSLY SEEN IN PARADES, INCLUDING THE SS21 MISSILE AND THE BMD 1981 AIR PORTABLE TRACKED HOWITZER. MY MA IS REPORTING SEPARATELY TO MOD. THE WHOLE EVENT TOOK JUST OVER ONE HOUR. THERE WAS NO FLY-PAST OF AIRCRAFT.

3. MY WIFE AND I ATTENDED THE SUBSEQUENT RECEPTION GIVEN IN THE KREMLIN PALACE OF CONGRESSES GIVEN JOINTLY BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPSU, THE PRESIDUM OF THE SUPREME SOVIET AND THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. GORBACHEV'S SPEECH OF WELCOME TO THE MANY HUNDRED SOVIET AND FOREIGN GUESTS WAS SHORT AND BLAND. THE ANNIVERSARY WAS, HE SAID, A DAY OF PRIDE AND OF REMEMBRANCE OF ALL WHO HAD FOUGHT TOGETHER AGAINST TYRANNY REGARDLESS OF IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES. THE LESSON FOR THE FUTURE WAS TO BE VIGILANT AND TO RESOLVE FUTURE PROBLEMS BY CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE.

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4. IN THE LONG QUEUE OF GUESTS TO GREET THE MOSCOW-BASED MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO AFTER THE RECEPTION AND BEFORE THE CONCERT WHICH FOLLOWED, GORBACHEV SPOKE TO ME WARMLY OF HIS VISIT TO BRITAIN AND OF THE GOOD FOUNDATION LAID THEN FOR A BETTER RELATIONSHIP. WE HAD RECENTLY BEEN THROUGH A DIFFICULT PATCH BUT THAT WAS NOW OVER. HE ASKED ME TO CONVEY HIS PERSONAL GREETINGS TO THE PRIME MINISTER. GROMYKO SAID BRIEFLY THAT HE LOOKED FORWARD TO A GOOD TALK WITH YOU IN VIENNA. MRS GORBACHEV, GRACIOUS BUT LOOKING RATHER PALE AND TIRED, SUBSEQUENTLY ALSO SPOKE OF THE VISIT LAST DECEMBER AND THE ENHANCED INTEREST IT HAD GIVEN HER IN BRITAIN

5. IN AN EARLIER CONVERSATION AT THE RECEPTION, SUSLOV, HEAD OF THE SECOND EUROPEAN DEPARTMENT AT THE MFA, HAD SAID THAT HE COULD GUARANTEE THAT ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE WELL FOR MY FAREWELL VISIT NEXT WEEK TO LENINGRAD. REFERRING TO THE RECENT EXPULSIONS HE ADDED THAT THERE WERE STILL VERY BITTER FEELINGS AMONGST HIS COLLEAGUES, BUT THAT HE EXPECTED THAT WHEN HE SAW ME ON MY RETURN FROM LENINGRAD WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO DISCUSS HOW VARIOUS IMPENDING BILATERAL ENGAGEMENTS COULD PROCEED.

6. MY US COLLEAGUE WHO HAD, AFTER GORBACHEV'S SPEECH OF 8 MAY, HAD DOUBTS WHETHER HE SHOULD ATTEND THE RECEPTION BUT HE DID AND WAS ALSO GIVEN WARM GREETINGS FOR THE PRESIDENT. HARTMAN TOLD ME THAT GORBACHEV HAD, HOWEVER, SAID NOTHING NEW ABOUT A POSSIBLE MEETING WITH REAGAN, REFERRING ONLY TO THE SHULTZ/GROMYKO MEETING IN VIENNA AS THE NEXT STEP IN US/SOVIET DIALOGUE.

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