

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FM MOSCOW

TO DESKBY 010800Z FCO

TELNO 1276

OF 301450Z SEPTEMBER 85

INFO IMMEDIATE PARIS

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, BONN, UKDEL NATO, UKREP BRUSSELS

GORBACHEV/MITTERRAND MEETING : THE SOVIET APPROACH

SUMMARY

1. BUILD UP IN THE SOVIET PRESS HAS BEEN SURPRISINGLY LOW KEY EMPHASISING IN GENERAL TERMS "TRADITIONALLY" GOOD FRENCH/SOVIET RELATIONS, AND SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENTS IN TRADE. THERE HAVE BEEN FEW HINTS HERE OF WHAT MAY COME OUT OF THE VISIT AND IT IS HARD TO SEE WHAT THEY MIGHT BE, ESPECIALLY ON ARMS CONTROL WHERE, DESPITE THE FRENCH ATTITUDE TO SDI, THE FOCUS IS INCREASINGLY ON GORBACHEV'S MORE IMPORTANT MEETING IN NOVEMBER.

DETAIL

2. FOR THE FIRST VISIT BY A SOVIET GENERAL SECRETARY TO A WESTERN COUNTRY SINCE BREZHNEV VISITED THE FRG IN 1981 (AND IN CONTRAST TO IT) THE SOVIET MEDIA BUILD-UP HAS BEEN MODEST: AN ARTICLE IN EACH OF IZVESTIA, PRAVDA, AND THE WEEKLY NOVOYE VREMYA, AN INTERVIEW WITH MME CRESSON, AND MISCELLANEOUS PRESS COMMENT. A FRENCH TELEVISION INTERVIEW WITH GORBACHEV IS TO BE BROADCAST HERE AND IN FRANCE ON THE EVENING OF 1 OCTOBER. THE LE MONDE CORRESPONDENT HAS SEEN THE QUESTIONS AND DESCRIBED THEM AS "IDIOTIC". ALTHOUGH LACKING IN MUCH INTEREST OR SUBSTANCE, THE TONE HAS BEEN WARM. THUS NOVOYE VREMYA OF 20 SEPTEMBER DESCRIBED THE VISIT AS "A TRIBUTE TO THE FRENCH PEOPLE FOR WHOM THE SOVIET PEOPLE ENTERTAIN THE WARMEST FRIENDSHIP AND SYMPATHY, AND A RECOGNITION OF THE ROLE OF SOVIET/FRENCH RELATIONS IN THE MODERN WORLD. THE SOVIET UNION HAS ALWAYS FAVOURED GOOD, FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH FRANCE ...".

3. THERE IS ALSO RECOGNITION OF FRANCE'S SUPPORT FOR THE NATO INF DECISION, AND OF THE EXISTENCE OF ANTI-SOVIET (SYNONYMOUS WITH ATLANTICIST) AND EVEN REVISIONIST ELEMENTS. BUT THE OVERWHELMING EMPHASIS IS ON FRANCE AS "OUR TRADITIONAL PARTNER" AND ON THE "TRADITIONAL POLITICAL DIALOGUE" (PRAVDA OF 22 AND 29 SEPTEMBER, RESPECTIVELY), WITH FRANCE'S ATTITUDE TO SDI, ITS ROLE IN THE "POSITIVE CHANGES" OF THE 60S AND 70S, AND MITTERRAND'S RESISTANCE TO US PRESSURES ON EAST/WEST TRADE BEING SINGLED OUT. BEYOND THIS, SOVIET COMMENTS ON THE POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP ARE GENERALISED, PUTTING THE VISIT IN THE CONTEXT OF "IMPROVING THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE IN EUROPE AND THE WORLD".

CONFIDENTIAL

/4.

4. ON THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP MOST EMPHASIS IS PUT ON THE SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE AND ECONOMIC TIES, WITH REFERENCE TO THE DOUBLING OF TRADE VOLUME SINCE 1980 OVER THE PRECEEDING FIVE-YEAR PERIOD, AND LOOKING FORWARD TO A NEW ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT FOR 1986-1990. (MME CRESSON, IN IZVESTIA ON 29 SEPTEMBER, DESCRIBED THE SOVIET UNION AS A "RELIABLE PARTNER".) MENTION IS ALSO MADE OF GOOD SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CO-OPERATION SEMI COLON CO-OPERATION IN SPACE EXPLORATION SEMI COLON AND STABLE, LONG-STANDING CULTURAL RELATIONS.

5. THE FRENCH/SOVIET CONSULTATIONS ON SPACE ISSUES HELD HERE BETWEEN MME RENOUARDE AND ADAMISHIN ON 19 SEPTEMBER SEEMED TO IDENTIFY SOME DIFFERENCES. THE FRENCH HAD RESISTED SOVIET ATTEMPTS TO EQUATE THEIR PROPOSALS ON THE NON-MILITARISATION OF SPACE WITH THE EARLIER (PRE-GENEVA) FRENCH PROPOSALS ON DEMILITARISATION. ON ASATS THE FRENCH POINTED TO THE EXISTENCE OF LOW-ORBIT SYSTEMS, AND THE ABSENCE OF RELIABLE MEANS OF VERIFICATION FOR A BAN, WHICH MUST INCLUDE LAND-BASED AS WELL AS SPACE-BASED SYSTEMS. BUT THEY SAW AS AN ADVANCE ON PBETROVSKY'S POSITION IN PARIS IN MAY, A SOVIET ASSERTION THAT ALL SYSTEMS INCLUDING LAND-BASED "COULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION". THE RUSSIANS THROUGHOUT STRESSED THE NEED FOR ADHERENCE TO THE LETTER OF THE ABM TREATY.

COMMENT

6. THERE IS A SENSE HERE THAT THE MEETING IN PARIS HAS BECOME SOMEWHAT OVERSHADOWED BY EVENTS SINCE THE VISIT WAS FIRST ANNOUNCED ON 4 JULY. THE SIMULTANEOUS ANNOUNCEMENT IN THE SOVIET PRESS OF THE MEETINGS WITH MITTERAND AND REAGAN, LESSENER, AT LEAST PRESENTATIONALLY THE IMPACT TO SOVIET READERS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LATTER. BUT NOW, WITH THE EVIDENT SIGNIFICANCE OF SHEVARDNADZE'S MEETINGS IN NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON (AND THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROPOSALS HE BROUGHT, ENHANCED BY THEIR CONFIDENTIALITY) AND THE ST

CONFIDENTIALITY) AND THE STRESS GIVEN HERE TO THE INTENSITY OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE GENEVA SUMMIT, THE MITTERAND VISIT APPEARS INCREASINGLY AS RATHER THIN FILLING TO AN ALTOGETHER THICKER SANDWICH.

2
CONFIDENTIAL

/7.

CONFIDENTIAL

7. FOR ALL THEIR RESTRAINTS IN REPORTING THE RAINBOW WARRIOR AFFAIR (CONFINED MAINLY TO BRIEF FACTUAL ACCOUNTS DRAWN FROM FRENCH PRESS REPORTS) THE RUSSIANS WILL NOT WISH TO RISK TOO GREAT A POLITICAL INVESTMENT IN THE VISIT WHEN THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IS GOING THROUGH A PERIOD OF POLITICAL EMBARRASSMENT THEY WILL NONETHELESS SEEK TO ESTABLISH MAXIMUM HARMONY OF VIEW AND AGREEMENT IN THE MOST FEASIBLE AREAS - PRINCIPALLY THE NEED TO STOP SDI AND POSSIBLY AGREEMENT ON THE NEED TO PRESERVE THE ABM TREATY, COUPLED WITH APPEALS FOR A RETURN TO DETENTE AND GREATER EAST/WEST COOPERATION VIA EUROPE (INCLUDING PERHAPS EC/CMEA LINKS). BUT IT IS HARD TO SEE ANYTHING OF INTERNATIONAL SUBSTANCE, ESPECIALLY ON ARMS CONTROL, EMERGING FROM THE VISIT, GIVEN THAT PROPOSALS (AS OPPOSED SIMPLY TO PROPAGANDA) HAVE NOW BEEN FORWARDED TO THE US/SOVIET NEGOTIATORS AT GENEVA TO GET ON WITH. THE THUNDER OF THE PARIS VISIT HAS TO SOME EXTENT BEEN STOLEN.

CARTLEDGE

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

EAST WEST & US/SOVIET RELATIONS
LIMITED

SOVIET D
DEFENCE D
RESEARCH D
PLANNING STAFF
EED
NAD
WED
ACDD
CRD
FED
NED
PUSD

PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR RIFKIND
PS/MR RENTON
PS/PUS
MR DEREK THOMAS
SIR W HARDING
MR FERGUSSON
MR GOODALL
MR JENKINS
MR DAUNT
MR DAVID THOMAS

3

CONFIDENTIAL