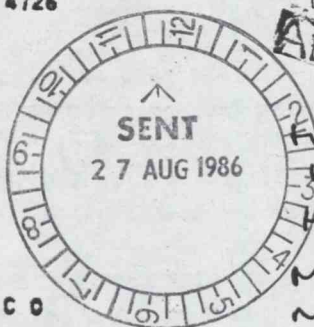


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YOUR TELNOS 680 - 682 : PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY TO GORBACHEV'S  
LETTER OF 10 JULY

SUMMARY

1. ACTION TAKEN WITH FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KOVALEV ON 26 AUGUST (SHEVARDNADZE IS ON HOLIDAY). HE LISTENED WITHOUT REACTION TO COMMENTS DRAWING ON YOUR TELNO 682 AND THEN LAUNCHED INTO CRITICISM OF THE UNENTHUSIASTIC BRITISH REACTION TO THE SOVIET EXTENSION OF THE MORATORIUM ON NUCLEAR TESTING, AND OF THE BRITISH APPROACH TO THE CDE END-GAME. MY RESPONSE ON THE MORATORIUM LED TO FURTHER EXCHANGE FOLLOWING STANDARD THEMES IN WHICH THERE WAS, UNSURPRISINGLY, NO MEETING OF MINDS.

DETAIL

2. IN SHEVARDNADZE'S ABSENCE ON HOLIDAY I WAS RECEIVED BY KOVALEV, FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER AT 1200 ON 26 AUGUST. GUSAREV, ACTING HEAD OF SECOND EUROPEAN DEPARTMENT WAS ALSO PRESENT. THE MEETING LASTED FOR NEARLY AN HOUR. HAVING HANDED OVER THE TEXT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER, TOGETHER WITH AN UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION PREPARED HERE, I SPOKE TO THE POINTS IN YOUR TELNO 682, OMITTING (1) (CHERNOBYL) WHICH I HAD RECENTLY DISCUSSED IN THE MFA, AND ADDING THAT WE WERE ALSO, IN THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL FIELD, LOOKING FORWARD TO A FAVOURABLE SOVIET REACTION TO THE INVITATION TO ATTEND A DITCHLY PARK CONFERENCE.

3. KOVALEV UNDERTOOK TO PASS THE TEXT IMMEDIATELY TO GORBACHEV. HE THEN PICKED UP THE ABSENCE OF ANY MENTION IN WHAT I HAD SAID OF THE EXTENSION OF THE SOVIET MORATORIUM ON NUCLEAR TESTING. HE SAID HE HAD NOTED THAT THE "MASS MEDIA" IN THE UNITED KINGDOM HAD PLAYED DOWN THE SOVIET MOVE, ON THE IMPORTANCE OF WHICH HE THEN ENLARGED FOR SEVERAL MINUTES IN LINE WITH CURRENT SOVIET PROPAGANDA THEMES. HE REQUESTED THAT I DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SOVIET GESTURE.

4. IN THE EXCHANGE WHICH FOLLOWED I SPOKE ON STANDARD LINES, DRAWING ON FCO GUIDANCE TELNO 119 OF 23 AUGUST 1985. I ALSO COMMENTED, I WAS STRUCK BY THE REITERATED IMPLICATION IN CURRENT PROPAGANDA THAT IN EXTENDING ITS MORATORIUM ON NUCLEAR TESTING THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT ALONE WAS AGAINST A NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST AND IN FAVOUR OF PEACE AND DISARMAMENT. THIS WAS NOT THE CASE. PENDING AGREEMENT ON MEASURES OF ARMS CONTROL IT WAS TO BE EXPECTED THAT STATES WOULD MAINTAIN THEIR ARMOURIES. IN THIS CONNECTION I HAD NOTED THE TASS ANNOUNCEMENT OVER THE WEEK-END THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WAS DECLARING A MARITIME DANGER ZONE IN PART OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT TESTS OF ROCKET LAUNCHERS.

5. KOVALEV HAD THE LAST WORD IN THE SENSE THAT THE MFA PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT OF MY CALL, CARRIED ON LAST NIGHT'S TV NEWS AND IN TODAY'S PRAVDA, STATES THAT WE DISCUSSED CERTAIN CURRENT QUESTIONS

5. KOVALEV HAD THE LAST WORD IN THE SENSE THAT THE MFA PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT OF MY CALL, CARRIED ON LAST NIGHT'S TV NEWS AND IN TODAY'S PRAYDA, STATES THAT WE DISCUSSED CERTAIN CURRENT QUESTIONS "IN PARTICULAR CONNECTED WITH THE SOVIET UNION'S UNILATERAL MORATORIUM ON NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS".

6. KOVALEV ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER CURRENT WESTERN ATTITUDES IN STOCKHOLM. IT APPEARED THAT THE SOVIET PROPOSALS WERE BEING USED BY THE WEST AS A PRETEXT FOR COMPLICATING THE ISSUE AND "PUTTING RODS IN THE WHEELS". THE SOVIET UNION WAS STILL KEEN THAT THE MEETING SHOULD ACHIEVE POSITIVE RESULTS BEFORE ITS CONCLUSION BUT WAS CONCERNED THAT IT WOULD END LIKE THE RECENT CSCE BERNE MEETING.

7. I SAID THAT, AS HAD BEEN MADE CLEAR BOTH DURING SHEVARDNADZE'S MEETING WITH YOU AND WHEN MR GRINYEVSKY WAS IN LONDON RECENTLY HMG LOOKED FORWARD TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE CDE. WE HAD WELCOMED THE MOST RECENT SOVIET PROPOSALS. ALTHOUGH I WAS NOT AWARE OF THE DAY-TO-DAY COURSE OF EVENTS IN STOCKHOLM I COULD IMAGINE THAT THESE PROPOSALS WOULD NOT BE SIMPLY ACCEPTED WITHOUT FURTHER NEGOTIATION. BUT I COULD ASSURE HIM THAT THE BRITISH SIDE WOULD CONTINUE TO APPROACH CDE CONSTRUCTIVELY AND IN THE HOPE OF A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION. (I HAD NOT AT THE TIME, PERHAPS FORTUNATELY, RECEIVED STOCKHOLM TELEGRAM NUMBER 198).

COMMENT

8. THE ATMOSPHERE DURING THE CALL WAS SOLEMN BUT NOT DISAGREEABLE. NO IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO THE POINTS BASED ON YOUR TELNO 682 WAS TO BE EXPECTED. IT IS SUFFICIENT THAT THEY WILL HAVE GONE INTO THE RECORD AND CAN BE FOLLOWED UP AS AND WHEN APPROPRIATE. KOVALEV'S PITCH ON THE MORATORIUM WAS PREDICTABLE. FOR THE PAST EIGHT DAYS THE SOVIET PROPAGANDA MACHINE HAS BEEN TREATING IT AS THE MAJOR EVENT OF THE HOUR, IN WHICH THE SOVIET UNION IS OFFERING A "HISTORIC CHANCE" TO MANKIND TO ESCAPE FROM THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR ANNIHILATION. (SEE HEMANS'S LETTER OF 20 AUGUST TO ROBINSON). WE SHALL BE REPORTING FURTHER ON THIS PHENOMENON AND THE CALCULATIONS WHICH MAY LIE BEHIND IT.

MARSHALL

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