

US/SOVIET ARMS CONTROL TALKS | EAST WEST US | SOVIET RELATIONS

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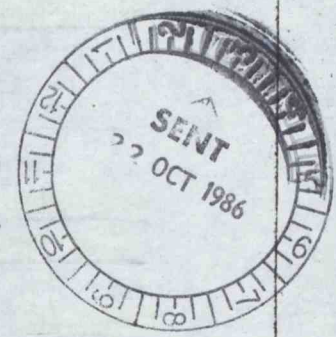
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INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

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IMMEDIATE



MIPT: DANISH PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH GORBACHEV

SUMMARY

1. USEFUL DANISH COMMUNITY BRIEFING PUTS FLESH ON BONES OF PRAVDA REPORT OF SCHLUTER/GORBACHEV MEETING ON 21 OCTOBER AND PROVIDES INTERESTING INSIGHTS INTO GORBACHEV'S MOOD AND ATTITUDES POST-REYKJAVIK. MORE EMPHASIS ON US FAILINGS, AS REVEALED AT REYKJAVIK, THAN ON DESIRE FOR OR POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER PROGRESS IN SUPER-POWER DIALOGUE.

DETAIL

2. THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE DANISH FOREIGN MINISTRY, AMBASSADOR MOELLER, GAVE A VERY FULL COMMUNITY BRIEFING IN THIS EMBASSY ON 22 OCTOBER ON PRIME MINISTER SCHLUTER'S MEETING WITH GORBACHEV ON THE PREVIOUS DAY. MOELLER TOOK US THROUGH HIS NOTE OF THE MEETING (AT WHICH HE WAS PRESENT) IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL AND, SINCE IT PROVIDES THE FIRST DIRECT INSIGHT WHICH WE HAVE HAD INTO GORBACHEV'S FRAME OF MIND AFTER THE REYKJAVIK MEETING, HIS ACCOUNT DESERVES THE FULL SUMMARY WHICH FOLLOWS.

3. MOELLER DESCRIBED GORBACHEV AS ENERGETIC, VIVID, ALERT, PERSUASIVE AND ABOVE ALL SELF-CONFIDENT. HE HAD EVIDENTLY BEEN ON TOP FORM AND ATTACHED CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE (AS THE UNUSUAL FULLNESS OF PRAVDA'S ACCOUNT OF THE MEETING CONFIRMS) TO IMPRESSING HIS FIRST WESTERN INTERLOCUTOR SINCE REYKJAVIK. THE TWO-HOUR DISCUSSION COVERED ARMS CONTROL AND, MUCH MORE BRIEFLY, REGIONAL PROBLEMS AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

US/SOVIET RELATIONS AND ARMS CONTROL

4. GORBACHEV GAVE SCHLUTER A BLOW-BY-BLOW ACCOUNT OF THE REYKJAVIK TALKS, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

I) ONLY THE SOVIET SIDE HAD PRODUCED NEW IDEAS AT REYKJAVIK; THE AMERICANS HAD NOT ONLY COME EMPTY-HANDED BUT, AT LEAST INITIALLY, HAS RESPONDED TO SOVIET PROPOSALS ONLY WITH STALE POSITIONS ON WHICH THE GENEVA TALKS HAD BOGGED DOWN. REAGAN "WAS BECOMING MORE AND MORE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH" (MOELLER HAD THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT THIS COMMENT WAS DIRECTED AT THE PRESIDENT'S DIMINISHED CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED DISCUSSION RATHER THAN AT ANY INCREASE IN OBSTINACY).

II) THE NEW SOVIET PROPOSALS WERE INTER-RELATED AND FORMED AN ENTITY. THE US WANTED TO PICK OUT FROM THEM PARTICULAR POINTS TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE WEST IN ORDER TO RETAIN STRATEGIC SUPERIORITY; THIS WAS UNACCEPTABLE. THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOVIET PROPOSALS STEMMED FROM THE LOGIC OF THEIR SUBSTANCE, IE IF STRATEGIC ARSENALS WERE TO BE CUT, IT FOLLOWED THAT THE ABM TREATY SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED. THE WESTERN PRESS HAD ACCUSED HIM (GORBACHEV) OF SETTING A TRAP FOR REAGAN BY INTRODUCING SOVIET OBJECTIONS TO THE SDI ONLY TOWARDS THE END OF THE TALKS, AFTER A GOOD MEASURE OF AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED ON OTHER ISSUES. THIS WAS A LIE. REAGAN HAD INTRODUCED THE SDI ISSUE AT AN EARLY STAGE OF THE DISCUSSIONS AND GORBACHEV HAD IMMEDIATELY MADE THE SOVIET POSITION CLEAR, EMPHASISING THE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE ISSUES OF THE ABMT, THE SDI AND NUCLEAR TESTING.

III) REAGAN HAD BEEN "SHOCKED" BY GORBACHEV'S PROPOSAL FOR A 50% REDUCTION IN ALL STRATEGIC WEAPONS AND HAD CALLED IN SHULTZ TO HELP OUT. AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED ON SUCH REDUCTIONS IN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THE 10-YEAR REDUCTION PERIOD BUT FOR THE SECOND FIVE YEARS THE US HAD TRIED TO CONCENTRATE ON LAND-BASED WEAPONS AND TO RETAIN THEIR RIGHT TO DEVELOP THE SDI AND TO CARRY OUT NUCLEAR TESTS.

IV) THE REYKJAVIK MEETING HAD NEVERTHELESS BEEN FAR FROM USELESS. BEFORE IT, DISCUSSION WAS ONLY OF REDUCTIONS IN NUCLEAR ARSENALS; THE TWO SIDES WERE NOW TALKING ABOUT THEIR ELIMINATION. AT REYKJAVIK, THE US HAD CHANGED IT POSITION FUNDAMENTALLY - "THROUGH 180 DEGREES" - ON EVERY ISSUE EXCEPT THE SDI.

V) US INTRANSIGENCE ON THE SDI ISSUE WAS DUE TO THE ASCENDENCY OF THE "MILITARY/INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX" AND TO ITS FIRM INTENTION OF EXHAUSTING THE SOVIET ECONOMY. WHEN SCHLUTER CHALLENGED THE LATTER POINT, GORBACHEV RETORTED THAT HE HAD IN HIS POSSESSION A RESUME OF A MEETING OF THE NSC WHICH PROVED THAT HE WAS RIGHT. GORBACHEV SAID THAT THE US ADMINISTRATION WAS COMPOSED OF PEOPLE WHO WERE "ONLY TEMPORARILY IN WASHINGTON AND WHOSE ATTENTION WAS FOCUSED ON THE NEXT ELECTION". THE SOVIET UNION WOULD

FOCUSED ON THE NEXT ELECTION". THE SOVIET UNION WOULD NEVERTHELESS MAINTAIN ITS PRINCIPLES, CONTINUE THE SEARCH FOR PROGRESS AND PRESENT ITS ARGUMENTS AS WIDELY AND FORCEFULLY AS POSSIBLE.

VI) GORBACHEV AGREED WITH SCHLUTER THAT THE EAST/WEST DIALOGUE SHOULD NOT BE A MONOPOLY OF THE TWO SUPER-POWERS. THE COUNTRIES OF WESTERN EUROPE WERE INVOLVED IN IT IN SEVERAL MULTILATERAL CONTEXTS BUT AS SOON AS "THE DEBATE BECAME SHARP", THEY DREW BACK AND LEFT MATTERS TO "THE BIG TWO". IT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL IF THE WEST RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR CONTACTS BETWEEN THE NATO TASK FORCE ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS REDUCTIONS AND THE CORRESPONDING WARSAW PACT GROUP.

VII) THE US AND THE SOVIET UNION SHOULD SEEK TO MAKE FURTHER PROGRESS ON THE BASIS OF WHAT HAD BEEN AGREED AT REYKJAVIK: THE SOVIET PROPOSALS REMAINED ON THE TABLE BUT THEY WERE INTER-LINKED.

REGIONAL ISSUES

5. GORBACHEV REFERRED TO REGIONAL CONFLICTS AT THE OUTSET OF THE DISCUSSION AND RIDICULED US MISTRUST OF DEVELOPMENTS IN NICARAGUA, WHERE THE NICARAGUAN PEOPLE HAD OF ITS OWN FREE WILL DECIDED TO CARRY THROUGH A SOCIAL REVOLUTION. THE SOVIET UNION HAD NO INTENTION OF ESTABLISHING MILITARY BASES IN NICARAGUA. THE US, BY CONTRAST, WAS EMBARKING ON A "NEW WAVE OF IMPERIALISM". IN A VERY BRIEF DISCUSSION OF AFGHANISTAN, GORBACHEV SIMPLY REITERATED THAT SOVIET TROOPS WOULD BE WITHDRAWN WHEN OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE, BY THE US AND PAKISTAN, CEASED.

HUMAN RIGHTS

6. GORBACHEV SAID THAT THE US CONCENTRATED EXCLUSIVELY ON THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES WHEN RAISING HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. THE SOVIET UNION WOULD SOON BEGIN A COUNTER-OFFENSIVE EXPOSING, E.G. LIVING CONDITIONS IN THE US AND OTHER EVILS OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM. REAGAN AND OTHER WESTERN LEADERS ADOPTED A "CAPITALISTIC" APPROACH TO THE REST OF THE WORLD BUT PARTICULARLY TO THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE SOVIET UNION, FOR ITS PART, FAVOURED A NEW ECONOMIC WORLD ORDER. GORBACHEV LAUNCHED INTO A PASSIONATE DEFENCE OF THE SOVIET SYSTEM: REJECTING WESTERN CONCEPTS OF PLURALISM, HE ARGUED THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD ITS OWN PLURALISM IN ITS FEDERAL STRUCTURE AND DIVERSITY OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES. HISTORY WOULD PROVE THE SUPERIORITY OF THE SOVIET SYSTEM: IT HAD ENABLED THE SOVIET PEOPLES TO PROGRESS AND IT WOULD NEVER BE ABANDONED.

COMMENT

7. ALTHOUGH GORBACHEV REAFFIRMED HIS VIEW THAT THE NEXT STEP SHOULD BE TO BUILD ON THE PROGRESS MADE AT REYKJAVIK, THE STRENGTH OF HIS CONDEMNATION OF US POLICY WAS NOT WEAKENED.

BE TO BUILD ON THE PROGRESS MADE AT REYKJAVIK, THE STRENGTH OF HIS CONDEMNATION OF US POLICIES (AND HIS REVEALING REMARK ABOUT THE DIFFICULTY OF DEALING WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN) MARKS SOME RETREAT FROM THE UP-BEAT OPTIMISM IN HIS AND OTHER SOVIET PRONOUNCEMENTS IN THE DAYS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING REYKJAVIK. THE PPAVDA REPORT SUMMARISED IN MIPT CONVEYS A SIMILAR IMPRESSION. THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP IS EVIDENTLY CONCERNED TO INCREASE PROPAGANDA PRESSURE ON THE US (AND ON WESTERN EUROPE) IN ORDER TO CREATE A POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT FAVOURABLE TO SOVIET INTERESTS AS THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS ENTER THEIR POST-REYKJAVIK PHASE. GORBACHEV'S REFERENCE TO THE US ADMINISTRATION'S TRANSITORY NATURE AND PRE-OCCUPATION WITH ELECTIONS CARRIES THE FIRST HINT THAT HE MAY NOW, IN THE LIGHT OF HIS EXPERIENCE AT REYKJAVIK, BE LOOKING BEYOND REAGAN. THE DISCUSSION ALSO REVEALED, DEPRESSINGLY, THAT GORBACHEV IS STILL THE PRISONER OF THE IDIES FIXES ABOUT THE "MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX", AND US IMPERIALISM OF WHICH YAKOVLEV IS AN ASSIDUOUS PROPONENT.

CARTLEDGE

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