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MIPT: NETHERLANDS PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO MOSCOW 20-22 NOVEMBER

1. THE NETHERLANDS FOREIGN MINISTER, MR VAN DEN BROEK, BRIEFED EC HEADS OF MISSION ON 22 NOVEMBER ABOUT MR LUBBERS' DISCUSSIONS WITH GORBACHEV. THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS WHICH EMERGED.

ARMS CONTROL

2. GORBACHEV'S MAIN LINE HAD BEEN TO ATTACK THE UNITED STATES FOR RETREATING FROM REYKJAVIK AND FOR MISREPRESENTING THAT MEETING: AND TO ACCUSE THE AMERICANS OF BEING INTERESTED ONLY IN ATTAINING MILITARY SUPERIORITY OVER THE SOVIET UNION. THE WEST EUROPEANS HAD ALSO COME IN FOR THEIR FAIR SHARE OF REPROACHES AND GORBACHEV HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF THE UK, FRANCE AND THE FRG FOR OPPOSING THE ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. LUBBERS HAD SHARPLY ATTACKED THE LINKAGE IMPOSED BY THE SOVIET UNION BETWEEN THE VARIOUS STRANDS OF ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATION. GORBACHEV HAD DEFENDED THIS BY ARGUING THAT THE STRATEGIC SITUATION HAD CHANGED SINCE AN INF AGREEMENT HAD BEEN TEMPORARILY DECOUPLED FROM PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC REDUCTIONS, NOT LEAST BECAUSE THE UK AND FRENCH MODERNISATION OF THEIR NUCLEAR FORCES WOULD RESULT IN THE CREATION OF 2,000 NEW NUCLEAR WARHEADS BY 1990. GORBACHEV CLAIMED THAT SOVIET CONCESSIONS CONSTITUTED 'THE STRING' WHICH HELD THE PACKAGE TOGETHER: NO PACKAGE, NO CONCESSIONS.

3. ON THE SDI, VAN DE BROEK HAD THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE 'SCARED TO DEATH BY IT'. SHEVARDNADZE, DURING VAN DEN BROEK'S 4 1/2 SESSION WITH HIM ON 21 NOVEMBER, HAD REPEATEDLY STRESSED THE OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY OF SDI TECHNOLOGY. GORBACHEV, WITH LUBBERS, HAD NOT MENTIONED THIS, CONCENTRATING INSTEAD ON THE DESTABILIZING EFFECT OF THE SDI AND ITS ENORMOUS COST WHICH, HE SAID, WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE PEOPLE OF WESTERN EUROPE AS WELL AS TO THE AMERICANS. HE HAD BEEN DISMISSIVE OF THE BENEFITS OF A 10-YEAR COMMITMENT TO NON-WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ABMT: THE US, HE SAID, WOULD ALWAYS INVOKE ARTICLE XV ('SUPREME INTERESTS') WHEN IT

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SUITED THEM. GORBACHEV SAID THAT THE US SHOULD NOT DELUDE THEMSELVES THAT THE SOVIET UNION COULD PRODUCE NO ANSWER TO THE SDI OR THAT SOVIET RESOURCES WERE INSUFFICIENT FOR THIS: EQUALLY, IT WAS AN ILLUSION TO IMAGINE THAT THE SOVIET UNION COULD BE BROUGHT TO THE POINT OF ECONOMIC EXHAUSTION. LUBBERS HAD ARGUED THAT, IN THAT CASE AND SINCE SO MANY SCIENTISTS BOTH SOVIET AND US DOUBTED WHETHER THE SDI WAS FEASIBLE IN ANY CASE, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SEE WHAT THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WAS WORRIED ABOUT. DESPITE ITS ILLOGICALITIES, HOWEVER, THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SDI IS, IN VAN DEN BROEK'S ASSESSMENT, DEEPLY FELT AND THE POSSIBILITY OF DELINKING THIS ISSUE FROM THAT OF STRATEGIC REDUCTIONS IS CONSEQUENTLY REMOTE.

4. VAN DEN BROEK SAID THAT GORBACHEV HAD SHOWN A "TOUCHING" PREOCCUPATION WITH THE SECURITY CONCERNS OF WESTERN EUROPE: LUBBERS HAD TOLD HIM THAT WEST EUROPEANS WERE FULLY CAPABLE OF TAKING CARE OF THESE. LUBBERS HAD ARGUED FOR A SUBSTANTIVE OUTCOME FROM THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE THAT FORUM WAS REPLACED BY A LARGER ONE: IF MBFR WITH ITS LIMITED PARTICIPATION AND GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE HAD FAILED TO PRODUCE RESULTS, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SEE WHY RESULTS COULD BE MORE EASILY ACHIEVED IN A WIDER FORUM AND OVER A MUCH WIDER AREA. GORBACHEV HAD MADE THE STANDARD CRITICISMS OF NATO FOR NOT RESPONDING TO THE BUDAPEST APPEAL ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS REDUCTIONS AND HAD REAFFIRMED THE PROPOSAL FOR A MEETING OF NATO AND WARSAW PACT EXPERTS TO PREPARE FOR A "STOCKHOLM PHASE II" CONFERENCE ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS REDUCTIONS. VAN DEN BROEK SAID THAT IT WAS QUITE CLEAR THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD GIVEN UP ON MBFR.

5. ON CW, GORBACHEV AND SHEVARDNADZE HAD RECOGNISED THAT PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE AND REGARDED EVENTUAL AGREEMENT ON A BAN AS POSSIBLE. THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT EXCHANGES ON A CTB.

## US/SOVIET RELATIONS

6. GORBACHEV HAD SPOKEN BITTERLY ABOUT PRESIDENT REAGAN'S SPEECH ON 18 NOVEMBER: HE CLEARLY FELT THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS NOT BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY BY THE PRESENT US ADMINISTRATION NOR TREATED AS AN EQUAL. HE HAD DONE HIS BEST TO SOW DOUBTS ABOUT THE EXTENT TO WHICH REAGAN COULD STILL BE REGARDED AS A VALID INTERLOCUTOR. LUBBERS HAD STRONGLY REAFFIRMED THE SINCERITY OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITMENT TO ARMS CONTROL AND HIS CAPACITY TO DELIVER ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS THROUGH CONGRESS - GORBACHEV SHOULD SEIZE HIS CHANCES WHILE HE COULD. SHEVARDNADZE, HOWEVER, HAD TOLD VAN DEN BROEK: "I DO NOT TRUST THE AMERICANS ANY MORE". NEITHER GORBACHEV NOR SHEVARDNADZE HAD MADE ANY REFERENCE TO A FUTURE SUMMIT.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

7. VAN DEN BROEK COMMENTED THAT THE SOVIET APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WAS CLEARLY QUITE DIFFERENT NOW FROM WHAT IT HAD BEEN TWO YEARS AGO. THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WAS EVIDENTLY NOT PREPARED TO BE PERMANENTLY IN THE DOCK AND WAS KEEN TO LAUNCH A COUNTER-OFFENSIVE, AS THE PROPOSAL FOR A CONFERENCE ON HUMANITARIAN ISSUES IN MOSCOW INDICATED. ON THIS, HE HAD TAKEN THE LINE WITH SHEVARDNADZE THAT THE PROPOSAL WOULD BE CAREFULLY STUDIED AND HAD PLUGGED THE NETHERLANDS PROPOSAL FOR A CSCE IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM. GORBACHEV AND SHEVARDNADZE HAD MADE MUCH OF THE PROCESS OF 'DEMOCRATISATION' WHICH WAS UNDER WAY IN THE SOVIET UNION AND OF THE LEADERSHIP'S DETERMINATION TO BRING ABOUT A CHANGE IN THE SOVIET MENTALITY. GORBACHEV HAD SPOKEN FRANKLY OF THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH OBSTRUCTED THIS PROCESS AND ADMITTED THAT THE WILL FOR CHANGE HAD YET TO PENETRATE THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY.

8. THERE WAS VIRTUALLY NO DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL ISSUES.

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EAST WEST & US/SOVIET RELATIONS  
LIMITED

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