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TELNO 654

OF 010925Z DECEMBER 86

INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW, WASHINGTON, EC POSTS, UKDEL NATO

*Please file
on*MY TELNO 649: VISIT OF DUTCH PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER
TO MOSCOW

SUMMARY

1. SOME FURTHER DETAILS FROM MR VAN DEN BROEK ON THE MOSCOW VISIT. HIS GENERAL IMPRESSION WAS THAT THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WERE PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH HOW TO MANAGE UNAVOIDABLE ECONOMIC CHANGE. MOSCOW'S TONE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAD CHANGED BUT NOT THE SUBSTANCE: THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION MIGHT BE ARMS CONTROL.

DETAIL

2. MR VAN DEN BROEK ENLARGED A LITTLE ON HIS BRIEFING TO COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS IN MOSCOW (MOSCOW TELNO 1397) DURING A COMMUNITY LUNCH I GAVE ON 26 NOVEMBER. HE SAID THAT GORBACHEV HAD EMPHASISED HIS REFORMIST APPROACH: HE HAD SPOKEN OF 'ACTIVATING THE HUMAN FACTOR' IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORM, AND HAD ADMITTED THAT NOT EVERYONE IN THE BUREAUCRACY WAS AS CONVINCED AS HE OF THE NECESSITY FOR REFORM. GORBACHEV HAD EVEN USED THE TERM 'DEMOCRATIZATION' BUT WITHOUT DEFINING IT. DECENTRALISATION WAS A KEY ELEMENT.
3. VAN DEN BROEK AND SHEVARDNADZE HAD HAD A TETE-A-TETE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND SHEVARDNADZE HAD AGREED TO LOOK AT INDIVIDUAL CASES. WHEN VAN DEN BROEK HAD RECOUNTED THE FACTS OF THESE CASES SHEVARDNADZE HAD COMMENTED 'I DON'T BELIEVE IT' (THIS COULD, OF COURSE, BE INTERPRETED IN SEVERAL WAYS.)
4. VAN DEN BROEK'S MAIN IMPRESSIONS WERE THAT HE THOUGHT THE MOSCOW LEADERSHIP WERE PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH HOW TO MANAGE UNAVOIDABLE ECONOMIC CHANGE. THEY DID NOT WISH TO FOLLOW THE CHINESE EXAMPLE OF GOING TOO FAST AND WERE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT HOW TO SQUARE REFORM WITH MARXIST/LENINIST IDEOLOGY. ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS HE THOUGHT THAT IN GENERAL THE TONE HAD CHANGED BUT NOT THE SUBSTANCE: THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION MIGHT BE ARMS CONTROL.

TRADE

5. I HAVE ALSO SPOKEN TO MS VAN ROOY, STATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN TRADE ABOUT THE IMPRESSIONS OF DUTCH BUSINESSMEN WHO ACCOMPANIED THE MINISTERIAL PARTY. SHE SAID THAT NO-ONE HAD FORMED THE IMPRESSION JOINT VENTURES WERE A POSSIBILITY IN THE SHORT TERM. IF THE RUSSIANS WERE REALLY SERIOUS IN THAT FIELD, CHANGES IN, FOR EXAMPLE, VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR EXPATRIATES WORKING IN THE SOVIET UNION WOULD

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HAVE TO BE MADE. THE 4 ECONOMIC PROTOCOLS SIGNED DURING THE VISIT STRENGTHENED THE EXISTING FRAMEWORK FOR BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS BASED ON THE 1975 AGREEMENT. THE NEXT STEP WOULD BE FOR BUSINESSMEN TO HAVE FURTHER TALKS ABOUT WHAT WAS POSSIBLE ON, FOR EXAMPLE, PRIVATE TRANSFERS, TAX, PRICES OF LAND, WATER AND ENERGY.

SDI

6. ETTEMA (DIRECTOR, ATLANTIC COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, MFA) HAD ALSO SPOKEN TO US ABOUT THE EXCHANGES ON SDI. GORBACHEV HAD SAID THAT HE FOUND SDI "POLITICALLY, MILITARY AND ECONOMICALLY UNACCEPTABLE". AS EXAMPLES OF OFFENSIVE SDI CAPABILITIES THE RUSSIANS HAD NOT VERY CONVINCINGLY LISTED THE POSSIBILITIES FOR ATTACKS ON NUCLEAR FACILITIES BY LASERS AND DESTRUCTION OF CROPS. THE RUSSIANS CLAIMED THAT THEY HAD ASKED THE US FOR AN AGREEMENT TO RESTRICT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SDI TO DEFENSIVE USE AND THAT THE AMERICANS HAD REFUSED. SHEVARDNADZE HAD SAID THAT IF THE SOVIET UNION WERE CONVINCED THAT SDI OFFERED NO OFFENSIVE RISK, THEY WOULD NOT DENY THE US A DEFENSIVE SYSTEM.

7. ANOTHER SOVIET CONCERN WAS THE PROPOSED COOPERATION IN THE SDI PROGRAMME BY BRITAIN, GERMANY, ISRAEL AND JAPAN. SHEVARDNADZE SUGGESTED THAT THIS MEANT THAT THE RUSSIANS WOULD HAVE TO FACE THE PROSPECT OF BOTH EUROPE AND JAPAN HAVING THEIR OWN SPACE SHIELDS.

MARGETSON

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EAST WEST & US/SOVIET RELATIONS
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