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INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, PARIS, BONN, UKDEL NATO, UKDEL CSCE VIENNA
INFO SAVING EAST EUROPEAN POSTS, PEKINGMR RENTON'S VISIT TO MOSCOW, 13-16 JANUARY: *mb*

SUMMARY

1. A VALUABLE VISIT IN ITS OWN RIGHT, WHICH ALSO CARRIED EXCHANGES ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S FORTHCOMING VISIT A USEFUL STAGE FURTHER. FIRM STATEMENTS OF UK POSITIONS ON ARMS CONTROL AND HUMAN RIGHTS: LITTLE NOVELTY BUT GREATER CLARITY IN SOVIET PRESENTATIONS, APART FROM FAR EAST AND SOUTH EAST ASIA, NO DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL ISSUES.

DETAIL

ARMS CONTROL

2. MY TELNO 55 SUMMARISED MR RENTON'S LONG AND SUBSTANTIAL DISCUSSION OF ARMS CONTROL MATTERS WITH SHEVARDNADZE ON 15 JANUARY AND THE LATTER'S REPEATED EMPHASIS ON THE NECESSITY FOR GREATER UK/SOVIET DIALOGUE ON THESE ISSUES. ALTHOUGH THE BILATERAL ORIENTATION WAS UNIQUE TO SHEVARDNADZE'S EXPOSITION, HIS STATEMENT OF THE SOVIET CASE WAS VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL IN CONTENT, IF NOT IN STYLE, WITH THOSE GIVEN TO MR RENTON BY DOBRYNIN (PARTY SECRETARY AND HEAD OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE) AND KARPOV (JUST RELIEVED AS CHIEF SOVIET NEGOTIATOR AT GENEVA, NOW HEAD OF THE MFA'S DISARMAMENT DEPARTMENT). DOBRYNIN'S ACCOUNT OF THE SOVIET APPROACH TO THE NEW GENEVA ROUND FOLLOWED FAIRLY CLOSELY THE LINES OF GORBACHEV'S COMMENTS TO ME ON 15 DECEMBER, FOR WHICH HE HAD DOUBTLESS WRITTEN THE BRIEF. THE SOVIET 'PACKAGE' WAS A CAREFUL BALANCE OF INTERESTS AND CONCESSIONS, REFLECTING GORBACHEV'S BELIEF THAT NEITHER SIDE COULD HAVE SECURITY IF THE OTHER DID NOT: IT FOLLOWED THAT ELEMENTS OF THE PACKAGE COULD NOT BE CHOSEN A LA CARTE. EUROPEAN INFLUENCE ON PRESIDENT REAGAN HAD BEEN UNHELPFUL: BUT THE QUESTION OF WHETHER REAGAN REALLY WANTED AGREEMENT REMAINED OPEN. SOVIET PROPOSALS FOR OPEN-ENDED DISCUSSIONS, WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS, ON BOTH NUCLEAR TESTS AND ON ABM TREATY INTERPRETATION HAD MET WITH A NEGATIVE US RESPONSE. OF THE EIGHT U S ADMINISTRATIONS WITH WHICH HE HAD DEALT, DOBRYNIN SAID THAT THE PRESENT ONE WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT AND LEAST READY TO COMPROMISE: IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW WHOM TO TALK TO WITHIN IT. LIKE SHEVARDNADZE, DOBRYNIN SPELT OUT THE WAY IN WHICH REAGAN HIMSELF HAD PROPOSED, AT REYKJAVIK, THE COMPLETE ELIMINATION OF ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS WITHIN 10 YEARS BUT HAD THEN REFUSED FLATLY TO DISCUSS THE SDI. SIMILARLY, SCHULTZ HAD REFUSED TO DISCUSS THE ABM TREATY WITH SHEVARDNADZE IN VIENNA. DOBRYNIN CLAIMED THAT A SEPARATE DEAL ON INF. APART FROM THE SOVIET

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PACKAGE, WOULD BE UNFAIR TO THE SOVIET UNION SINCE IT WOULD LEAVE THE UK AND FRANCE FREE TO INCREASE THEIR NUCLEAR FORCES AS THEY WISHED: EQUALLY, THE SOVIET UNION COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO REDUCE ITS MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS WHILE ACCEPTING UNRESTRAINED SDI RESEARCH BY THE US - IN 10 YEARS, THE AMERICANS WOULD HAVE SDI WHILE THE SOVIET UNION HAD 50% LESS STRATEGIC MISSILES WITH WHICH TO SWAMP IT.

3. KARPOV SPOKE IN VERY SIMILAR TERMS. THE SOVIET UNION HAD MADE A MAJOR CONCESSION AT REYKJAVIK IN RECOGNISING A CERTAIN LEVEL OF PERMISSIBLE SDI RESEARCH; BUT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE THAT THE PROGRAMME DID NOT TRANSGRESS CERTAIN LIMITS IF IT WERE NOT TO UPSET STABILITY AND INCREASE THE RISK OF NUCLEAR WAR BY ACCIDENT. HENCE THE SOVIET EMPHASIS ON SATISFACTORY DEFINITIONS OF 'LABORATORIES', ON WHICH THERE HAD BEEN A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING WHEN THE ABM TREATY HAD BEEN RATIFIED, AND 'ELEMENTS', A TERM WHICH WAS DESIGNED TO GET ROUND THE PROBLEM OF WHETHER EG, LASERS (WHICH HAD OTHER APPLICATIONS) WERE 'COMPONENTS' OF A SYSTEM 'BASED ON OTHER PHYSICAL PRINCIPLES' OR NOT. SOVIET LINKAGE BETWEEN AGREEMENT ON THE SDI AND STRATEGIC NUCLEAR REDUCTIONS WAS NOT NEGOTIABLE: HOW COULD THE SOVIET UNION BE EXPECTED TO REDUCE THESE WEAPONS WHEN, IF SDI WERE TO BE SUCCESSFULLY TESTED AND THEN DEPLOYED, THE SOVIET REQUIREMENT MIGHT BE TO INCREASE ITS STRATEGIC ARSENAL ?

4. IN BOTH DISCUSSIONS, MR RENTON STRESSED THE ILLOGICALITY OF LINKING AN INF AGREEMENT TO AGREEMENT ON THE SDI AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CONCENTRATING ON THOSE AREAS IN WHICH PROGRESS WAS POSSIBLE - INF, 50% STRATEGIC REDUCTIONS AND A CW BAN. THERE COULD HAVE BEEN AGREEMENT AT REYKJAVIK IF GORBACHEV HAD NOT INSISTED ON RESTRICTING WHAT WAS CURRENTLY PERMISSIBLE UNDER THE ABM TREATY. THE UK'S OWN MINIMAL STRATEGIC DETERRENT SHOULD BE LEFT TO ONE SIDE WHILE PROGRESS WAS SOUGHT IN THOSE AREAS IN WHICH IT WAS FEASIBLE. THE CAMP DAVID APPROACH WAS PRACTICAL AND ACHIEVABLE.

HUMAN RIGHTS

5. IN HIS DISCUSSIONS BOTH WITH FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KOVALEV AND WITH AMBASSADOR KASHLEV (DIRECTOR OF HUMANITARIAN AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS IN THE MFA AND LEADER OF THE SOVIET CSCE DELEGATION AT VIENNA, MR RENTON SPELT OUT CLEARLY AND FIRMLY THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ATTACH TO FAMILY RE-UNIFICATION AND HUMANITARIAN ISSUES. HE DREW KOVALEV'S ATTENTION TO OUTSTANDING FAMILY RE-UNIFICATION CASES IN WHICH THE UK HAS A DIRECT INTEREST AND STRESSED THE DESIRABILITY OF RESOLVING THEM IN ADVANCE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT: HE ALSO EMPHASISED THE CONCERN TO WHICH CASES SUCH AS THAT OF OGORODNIKOV GIVE RISE IN THE UK AND THE STRENGTH OF BRITISH FEELING ABOUT THE PATHETICALLY LOW LEVEL OF JEWISH EMIGRATION FROM THE SOVIET UNION. WITH KASHLEV, MR RENTON RAISED IN ADDITION A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC 'REFUSENIK' CASES WHICH HAD BEEN RAISED WITH HIM IN LONDON. BOTH KOVALEV AND KASHLEV RESPONDED BY ATTACKING THE CONDUCT OF THE UK DELEGATION AT THE CSCE MEETING IN VIENNA, ACCUSING THE DELEGATION OF VIOLATING THE NORMS OF DIPLOMATIC PROCEDURE AND OF 'OUTRAGEOUS' BEHAVIOUR. WHEN MR RENTON, STRESSING THAT CANDOUR

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SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS DISCOURTESY, DEFENDED THE UK DELEGATION AND POINTED OUT THAT VERY FEW OF THE 80 QUESTIONS WHICH IT HAD PUT TO THEIR SOVIET COLLEAGUES HAD RECEIVED ANSWERS, KASHLEV CLAIMED THAT THE UK DELEGATION HAD ITSELF BEEN RETICENT ON THE UK HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD (250,000 HOMELESS, 12,000 PEACENIKS ARRESTED, 40 DEATHS IN POLICE CUSTODY ETC. ETC.) MR RENTON UNDERTOOK THAT ANY FACTUAL INFORMATION REQUIRED BY THE SOVIET SIDE WOULD READILY BE MADE AVAILABLE.

6. MR RENTON CALLED, ON 16 JANUARY, ON THE DEAN OF THE JEWISH REFUSENIK COMMUNITY, PROFESSOR LERNER, AT HIS FLAT: SIX OTHER REFUSENIKS WERE PRESENT. THE REFUSENIKS WERE ABLE TO VOICE THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT THE NEW SOVIET LEGISLATION ON EXIT VISAS AND THE VISIT WAS WITHOUT DOUBT A USEFUL MORALE-RAISER.

REGIONAL ISSUES

7. AS SHEVARDNADZE'S CONCENTRATION ON ARMS CONTROL LEFT NO TIME FOR A REPLY TO MR RENTON'S QUESTIONS ABOUT AFGHANISTAN AND AS THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER COVERING AFRICAN AFFAIRS WAS SICK, THE ONLY DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL ISSUES WAS WITH ROGACHEV, DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FAR EAST AND SOUTH EAST ASIA. ROGACHEV'S PRESENTATION WAS DISAPPOINTINGLY ORTHODOX AND UNINFORMATIVE, BUT HE WAS RELATIVELY UP-BEAT ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET RELATIONS WITH CHINA. MIDDLE EAST ISSUES DID NOT ARISE DURING ANY OF MR RENTON'S DISCUSSIONS.

BILATERAL

B. PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT.

MR RENTON WAS ABLE TO DISCUSS BOTH WITH KOVALEV AND DOBRYNIN THE AGENDA AND PROGRAMME FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION. HE TOLD KOVALEV THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A BROAD PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION WITH GORBACHEV AS WELL AS EXCHANGES ON MORE SPECIFIC ISSUES SUCH AS INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, THE MANAGEMENT OF ECONOMIC CHANGE, REGIONAL QUESTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS: SOVIET PROPOSALS FOR DOCUMENTS WHICH MIGHT BE SIGNED DURING THE VISIT, EG ON COOPERATION IN SPACE, WERE BEING CAREFULLY STUDIED IN LONDON. TO DOBRYNIN, MR RENTON MENTIONED THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER'S DISCUSSIONS WITH GORBACHEV IN DECEMBER 1984 HAD BENEFITTED FROM THEIR INFORMAL SETTING AT CHEQUERS (DOBRYNIN TOOK THE POINT AND INDICATED THAT IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE SOMETHING SIMILAR). MR RENTON FLOATED THE IDEA OF A WALKABOUT IN A MOSCOW SUBURB, ESCORTED PERHAPS BY ELTSIN: DOBRYNIN SAW NO PROBLEM AND UNDERTOOK TO MENTION THIS SUGGESTION TO GORBACHEV.

9. UK/SOVIET TRADE.

MR RENTON HAD A CORDIAL THOUGH UNREMARKABLE DISCUSSION WITH DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE IVANOV: BUT IVANOV FAILED TO PRODUCE THE PROMISED LETTER FROM HIS MINISTER WHICH WILL CONSTITUTE SOVIET SIGNATURE OF THE CREDIT PROTOCOL INITIALLED ON 9 JANUARY.

10. SUPREME SOVIET VISIT.

DURING MR RENTON'S CALL ON DOBRYNIN, HE WAS TOLD THAT THE SUPREME SOVIET COULD ACCEPT OUR INVITATION TO SEND A DELEGATION TO THE UK IN FEBRUARY ALTHOUGH NOT, PERHAPS, AS EARLY AS OUR PROPOSED DATE OF 2 FEBRUARY. SUBSEQUENTLY, WE WERE TOLD THAT THE DATES OF 2-7 FEBRUARY WERE AFTER ALL ACCEPTABLE ALTHOUGH THE IDENTITY OF THE DELEGATION'S LEADER WAS STILL UNCERTAIN.

COMMENT

11. THE RUSSIANS CLEARLY WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO MAKE THIS VISIT SERIOUS AND WORTHWHILE. IT WAS SIGNIFICANT, NOT LEAST IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S FORTHCOMING VISIT, THAT THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT DISCUSSIONS, WITH SHEVARDNADZE AND DOBRYNIN, WERE DEVOTED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY TO ARMS CONTROL. SOVIET PRESS COVERAGE OF MR RENTON'S UNUSUALLY LONG DISCUSSION WITH SHEVARDNADZE (MY TELNO 54) REFLECTED THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP ATTACHED TO IT. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THOSE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, THE TONE OF THE TALKS WAS SERIOUS AND UNPOLEMICAL. MR RENTON LEFT HIS SOVIET HOSTS IN NO DOUBT EITHER OF HMG'S REFUSAL TO BE SWEEPED ALONG BY UTOPIAN VISIONS OF NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT OR OF THE STRENGTH OF BRITISH FEELING ON HUMANITARIAN ISSUES. HE MADE IT CLEAR THROUGHOUT THAT HE HAD NOT COME TO MOSCOW AS 'JOHN THE BAPTIST' FOR THE PRIME MINISTER (WHO DID NOT NEED ONE): HIS EXCHANGES ON THE SUBJECT OF HER VISIT NEVERTHELESS ESTABLISHED A USEFUL BASIS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AT WORKING LEVEL. AS A RESULT OF HIS DISCUSSIONS, BOTH SIDES WILL NOW HAVE A MUCH CLEARER VIEW OF THE POSITIONS OF THE OTHER ON WHICH TO BASE THEIR INTELLECTUAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE RESUMED DIALOGUE AT THE TOP LEVEL.

12. FULL RECORDS FOLLOW BY BAG.

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