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RESTRICTED  
IMMEDIATE

COPENHAGEN FOR FOREIGN SECRETARY'S PARTY

US/SOVIET RELATIONS : PRESIDENT REAGAN'S INTERVIEW WITH AMERICAN TELEVISION NETWORKS  
SUMMARY

1. AN UNEVEN PERFORMANCE BY THE PRESIDENT. ON INF HE PREVIEWED THE LINE HE WILL BE TAKING WITH CONGRESSIONAL DOUBTERS. ON THE SOVIET UNION, A NUMBER OF FRIENDLY REFERENCES TO GORBACHEV, DESPITE A BRIEF FLASHBACK TO THE EVIL EMPIRE SPEECH. ON AFGHANISTAN, A HARD LINE ON CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR THE RESISTANCE DURING THE PERIOD OF SOVIET WITHDRAWAL.

DETAIL

2. THE PRESIDENT GAVE A TAPED INTERVIEW IN THE OVAL OFFICE ON 3 DECEMBER TO THE ANCHORMEN OF THE FOUR AMERICAN TV NETWORKS. THE INTERVIEW WAS BROADCAST LATER ON 3 DECEMBER (TRANSCRIPT BY BAG TO SOVIET DEPARTMENT).

4. THE MAIN POINTS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

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ON RIGHT-WING OPPOSITION: QUOTE I THINK THAT THE OBJECTIONS WE ARE HEARING ... ARE BASED ON A LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AS TO WHAT THIS TREATY CONTAINS, AND PARTICULARLY THEY ARE IGNORANT OF THE ADVANCES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE IN VERIFICATION UNQUOTE. QUOTE WE WILL SIGN A TREATY WHEN WE ARE SURE THAT THAT TREATY IS AS BENEFICIAL TO US AS IT IS TO THEM ... I THINK THAT SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO ARE OBJECTING THE MOST ... BASICALLY DOWN IN THEIR DEEPEST THOUGHTS HAVE ACCEPTED THAT WAR IS INEVITABLE UNQUOTE.

NEXT STEPS IN ARMS CONTROL

QUOTE IF IT COMES TO THE POINT OF US NEGOTIATING, AS I HOPE IT DOES ONE DAY ON THOSE BATTLEFIELD TACTICAL WEAPONS, THEN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS MUST BE NEGOTIATED AS WELL. ... BOTH WOULD HAVE TO BE - WELL, ONE ELIMINATED AND THE OTHER BROUGHT DOWN TO PARITY UNQUOTE. ON THE PROSPECTS OF A MOSCOW VISIT AND A START AGREEMENT NEXT YEAR QUOTE I THINK THAT WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A MEETING IN MOSCOW, AND I THINK THERE IS A REASONABLY GOOD CHANCE THAT WE WILL MAKE ANOTHER GIGANTIC STEP FORWARD IN THE ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS UNQUOTE. ON THE SAME THEME HE ADDED QUOTE IN REYKJAVIK, WE HAD COME TO AN AGREEMENT ON LITERALLY TOTAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT EXCEPT THAT, AT THE VERY LAST MINUTE, THEY SAID IT COULD ONLY TAKE PLACE IF WE GAVE UP SDI, AND THAT'S WHEN I CAME HOME UNQUOTE. ASKED ABOUT THE WITHDRAWAL OF US TROOPS FROM EUROPE THE PRESIDENT RESPONDED QUOTE NOT AT A TIME WHEN WE ARE ALREADY OUTWEIGHED BY THE OPPOSITION UNQUOTE.

SOVIET UNION

ASKED WHETHER HE WAS CAPABLE OF STANDING UP TO GORBACHEV QUOTE I HAVEN'T CHANGED FROM THE TIME WHEN I MADE A SPEECH ABOUT AN EVIL EMPIRE UNQUOTE. BUT THE PRESIDENT ADDED LATER THAT ALTHOUGH PREVIOUS SOVIET LEADERS HAD SOUGHT A ONE WORLD COMMUNIST STATE QUOTE WE NOW HAVE A LEADER WHO HAS NEVER MADE THAT CLAIM BUT IS WILLING TO SAY THAT HE IS PREPARED TO LIVE WITH OTHER PHILOSOPHIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES UNQUOTE.

HUMAN RIGHTS

QUOTE WE HAVE MADE SOME HEADWAY ... BUT WE HAVE GOT TO GO FURTHER ... WE ARE NOT TRYING TO INTERFERE IN THEIR INTERNAL WORKINGS. BUT MAYBE WE CAN MAKE THEM SEE THAT IF THEIR PEOPLE HAD MORE OF THAT GLASNOST HE HAS BEEN TALKING ABOUT, THEY WOULDN'T WANT TO EMIGRATE UNQUOTE.

ON WHETHER THE US WOULD FACILITATE A SOVIET WITHDRAWAL BY MAKING A COMMITMENT NOT TO SUPPLY THE MUJAHEDIN FOR A YEAR QUOTE I DON'T THINK WE COULD DO ANYTHING OF THAT KIND BECAUSE THE PUPPET GOVERNMENT THAT HAS BEEN LEFT THERE HAS A MILITARY ... YOU CAN'T SUDDENLY DISARM THEM AND LEAVE THEM PREY TO THE OTHER GOVERNMENT. THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN MUST BE ASSURED OF THE RIGHT OF ALL OF THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN ESTABLISHING THE GOVERNMENT THEY WANT AND THAT REQUIRES MORE THAN JUST GETTING HIS FORCES OUT OF THERE UNQUOTE.

THE DOLLAR

QUOTE I DON'T THINK WE'VE DONE ANYTHING TO CONTRIBUTE TO ITS FALLING FURTHER UNQUOTE. IT MIGHT BE THAT SOME FOREIGN CURRENCIES WERE WAY BELOW VALUE AND HAD COME UP TO WHERE THEY SHOULD PROPERLY BE. QUOTE A SUDDEN SURGE OF CUTTING INTEREST RATES IN SOME OF OUR TRADING ALLIES ABROAD DID HAVE THE EFFECT, AGAIN, OF MAKING THE DOLLAR FALL UNQUOTE (THE WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN SAID LATER THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD MIS-SPOKEN ON THIS POINT).

COMMENT

5. THE CONFLICTING PRESSURES WHICH THE PRESIDENT IS FACING IN THE RUN-UP TO THE SUMMIT WERE APPARENT AT A NUMBER OF POINTS. HE SPOKE STRONGLY OF THE NEED TO RATIFY THE INF TREATY AND MADE A NUMBER OF FAVOURABLE REFERENCES TO GORBACHEV. BUT HE BALANCED THIS WITH A REAFFIRMATION THAT HIS UNDERLYING VIEWS HAD NOT CHANGED SINCE THE EVIL EMPIRE SPEECH. ON AFGHANISTAN HE EXEMPTED GORBACHEV FROM RESPONSIBILITY, BUT POINTEDLY DECLINED TO SAY THAT THE US WOULD BE WILLING TO FACILITATE A SOVIET WITHDRAWAL BY HALTING SUPPORT TO THE MUJAHEDIN. AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEW HE WAS LURED INTO A LONG COMMENT ON THE IRAN/CONTRAS AFFAIR, IN WHICH HE REVERTED TO HIS EARLIER LINE THAT HE HAD NOT TRADED ARMS FOR HOSTAGES.

6. ALL IN ALL, AND AS EXPECTED, A MUCH LESS FLUENT PERFORMANCE THAN GORBACHEV'S EARLIER THIS WEEK (OUR TELNO 2672). BUT THIS WAS THE FAMILIAR REAGAN RE-STATING A NUMBER OF HIS DEEPLY HELD BELIEFS. BOTH THE INTERVIEWERS LAST NIGHT AND THE PRESS TODAY TREATED HIM FAIRLY GENTLY, AND HE IS UNLIKELY TO SUFFER IN THE RATINGS ON THE BASIS OF THIS WEEK'S EXCHANGE OF INTERVIEWS ALONE. BUT THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT HIS APPROVAL RATINGS, PARTICULARLY IN RESPECT OF HIS ABILITY TO HANDLE DOMESTIC ISSUES, MAY AGAIN BE FALLING SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW THE PSYCHOLOGICALLY IMPORTANT 50 PERCENT FIGURE. IN TWO RECENT PRE-SUMMIT POLLS THE PRESIDENT'S QUOTE FAVOURABILITY RATING UNQUOTE CAME OUT ONLY 4 AND 6 PERCENT RESPECTIVELY AHEAD OF GORBACHEV'S.

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