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MY TELNO 335 (NOT TO ALL), 338 AND 340. CENTRAL COMMITTEE
PLENUM: COMMENT

SUMMARY

1. A MAJOR AND WIDERANGING SPEECH BY GORBACHEV, BUT ONE LACKING IN SPARKLE AND NOVELTY, AND COUCHED AT TIMES IN UNUSUALLY DEFENSIVE LANGUAGE. SOME SHARPER COMMENTS BY LIGACHEV ON THE OPENING DAY OF THE PLENUM ON ISSUES RELATED TO GLASNOST. A MINOR LEADERSHIP RESHUFFLE WITH A SMALL PLUS FOR GORBACHEV. BUT NO MAJOR CHANGES. THE GLASNOST PROCESS MAY NOW BE LOSING SOME IMPETUS AS ENERGIES ARE CONCENTRATED ON THE ECONOMY AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE PARTY CONFERENCE.

DETAIL

2. GORBACHEV'S SPEECH COVERED THE WHOLE FIELD OF PERESTROIKA - GLASNOST', DEMOCRATISATION AND ECONOMIC REFORM - AS WELL AS FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON WHICH I HAVE TELEGRAPHED SEPARATELY. IT WAS A MODERATE AND CAUTIOUS SPEECH. ITS MAIN MESSAGE IS THAT GLASNOST' MAY HAVE BEEN PROCEEDING TOO FAST WHILE DEMOCRATISATION AND THE ECONOMIC REFORM HAVE NOT BEEN PROCEEDING FAST ENOUGH.

3. SOME OF GORBACHEV'S LANGUAGE WAS NOTABLY DEFENSIVE. HE HAS TALKED ON MANY OCCASIONS IN THE PAST OF BUREAUCRATIC FOOT-DRAGGING OVER THE ECONOMIC REFORM PROCESS. BUT ON THIS OCCASION HE USED EVEN STRONGER LANGUAGE, REFERRING AT ONE POINT TO THOSE WHO ARE DELIBERATELY TRYING TO SABOTAGE AND DESCREDIT THE REFORMS. HE ALSO STRESSED TO A GREATER EXTENT THAN I HAVE SEEN BEFORE THE IDEOLOGICAL BASIS OF SOME OF THE OPPOSITION TO PERESTROIKA. HE MADE A SPECIFIC POINT OF TAKING UP THE ARGUMENTS OF THOSE WHO CLAIMED THAT PERESTROIKA REPRESENTED A DEPARTURE FROM THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SOCIALISM AND MARXISM-LENINISM. IN TALKING OF DEMOCRATISATION HE MENTIONED

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THOSE WHO HAD WARNED THAT THIS WOULD LEAD TO CHAOS.

4. HE STRESSED, AS HE HAS ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, THE NEED FOR THE PARTY ITSELF TO SET AN EXAMPLE IN THE MATTER OF DEMOCRATISATION, BUT THE LANGUAGE HE USED SUGGESTS THAT MANY PARTY MEMBERS REMAIN UNENTHUSIASTIC. HIS COMMENTS ON THE DIRECTION SUCH REFORMS MIGHT TAKE WERE NOTICEABLY VAGUE. THIS SUGGESTS THAT, WITH THE PARTY CONFERENCE NOW ONLY SOME FOUR MONTHS AWAY, THERE IS STILL LITTLE IN THE WAY OF LEADERSHIP AGREEMENT ON CONCRETE PROPOSALS FOR THIS KEY ITEM OF THE CONFERENCE AGENDA.

ECONOMY

5. ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, GORBACHEV'S CRITICISMS OF THE MINISTERIAL BUREAUCRACY HAD A WEARY AND FAMILIAR RING. IT IS ALSO CLEAR FROM THIS SECTION OF HIS SPEECH THAT THE NEW LAW ON THE STATE ENTERPRISE IS NOT HAVING AN EASY PASSAGE. HIS CLAIM THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO REAL GROWTH IN NATIONAL INCOME BETWEEN 1960-80 IF ONE DISCOUNTED OIL PRICE FLUCTUATIONS AND THE GROWTH IN ALCOHOL PRODUCTION IS LIKELY TO HAVE SHOCKED MANY OF HIS AUDIENCE. THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF SUGGESTIONS RECENTLY THAT SOME OF THE GROWTH RATES CLAIMED IN THE LATE 1970S WERE ILLUSORY. BUT I HAVE NOT YET SEEN SUCH A GRAPHIC CONDEMNATION OF ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE UNDER BREZHNEV. PRESUMABLY GORBACHEV HOPES THAT SUCH REVELATIONS WILL FINALLY PERSUADE HIS AUDIENCE THAT THERE IS INDEED NO ALTERNATIVE TO HIS REFORMS.

GLASNOST'

6. THE LANGUAGE ON GLASNOST' AND HISTORY WAS MEASURED AND CAUTIOUS. THERE WAS NO SUGGESTION OF BACKTRACKING, BUT THE EMPHASIS THROUGHOUT THIS PASSAGE WAS ON THE NEED FOR A PERIOD OF CONSOLIDATION. THE ANALYSIS OF HISTORY NEEDED TIME. PEOPLE MUST RESTRAIN THEIR IMPATIENCE. HE ALSO EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING ONE-SIDED (IE UNDULY NEGATIVE) INTERPRETATIONS OF HISTORY, AND SAID THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN DEVELOPMENTS WHICH WERE AN INHERENT PART OF THE SOCIALIST SYSTEM AND THOSE WHICH WERE DISTORTIONS. PRESUMABLY THIS IS A WARNING TO SOME ACADEMICS WHO HAVE BEGUN TO SUGGEST THAT STALINISM WAS A NATURAL PRODUCT OF THE SOVIET SYSTEM AND NOT AN INDIVIDUAL ABERRATION. THE MEDIA AND THE CULTURAL INTELLIGENTSIA WERE PRAISED FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO GLASNOST BUT ALSO WARNED AGAINST GOING TOO FAR TOO FAST.

LIGACHEV

7. LIGACHEV'S SPEECH ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE PLENUM WAS VERY LARGELY DEVOTED TO EDUCATIONAL REFORM, ON WHICH WE SHALL BE REPORTING IN MORE DETAIL BY BAG. BUT HE ALSO MADE A NUMBER OF COMMENTS ON GLASNOST'-RELATED ISSUES WHICH PROVIDE AN INTERESTING OPPORTUNITY FOR COMPARISON WITH GORBACHEV'S TREATMENT OF THE SAME SUBJECT. LIGACHEV'S COMMENTS WERE BOTH MORE INCISIVE AND MORE CONSERVATIVE. HIS HEAVY EMPHASIS ON THE NEED FOR A CORRECT CLASS/IDEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO HISTORY AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES HAD A MARKEDLY OLD-FASHIONED RING, AS DID HIS ILL-TEMPERED COMMENTS ON WHAT HE TERMED THE CURRENT FAD FOR "'PRIMITIVE'" MUSIC. HIS DISLIKE OF THOSE WHO OVEREMPHASISED THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF SOVIET HISTORY CAME THROUGH MORE STRONGLY THAN IN GORBACHEV'S SPEECH, AND HIS PRAISE FOR PRAVDA'S (NOTABLY CONSERVATIVE) HANDLING OF THIS SUBJECT WOULD SEEM TO BACK UP THE REPORTS WE HAVE HAD THAT HE HAS BEEN ENCOURAGING PRAVDA IN TAKING THIS LINE.

8. LIGACHEV'S COMMENT THAT THE RESULTS OF DISTORTED NATIONAL ATTITUDES HAD BEEN SEEN IN YAKUTIA AS WELL AS IN ALMA ATA IS THE FIRST PUBLIC CONFIRMATION I HAVE SEEN OF THE FACT (WHICH WE HAVE HEARD MENTIONED IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS) THAT THERE WERE NATIONAL DISTURBANCES IN YAKUTIA LAST YEAR.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

9. THE PROMOTION OF MASLYUKON THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF GOSPLAN, AND THE DEMOTION OF ELTSIN CAME AS NO SURPRISE. THE PROMOTION OF RAZUMOVSKY, WHO WAS BROUGHT IN BY GORBACHEV TO RUN THE SENSITIVE CENTRAL COMMITTEE DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR PARTY PERSONNEL MATTERS IN 1985, IS A MINOR PLUS FOR GORBACHEV. AGED 51, HE IS THE YOUNGEST OF THE CANDIDATE AND FULL MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO AND MAY BE A MAN TO WATCH.

10. THE BRINGING INTO THE SECRETARIAT OF BAKLANOV, WHO WILL, WE ASSUME, UNDERSTUDY ZAIKOV IN SUPERVISING THE DEFENCE INDUSTRIES GETS ROUND THE PROBLEM OF WHAT TO DO ABOUT ZAIKOV'S DOUBLE PORTFOLIO (HE IS ALSO FIRST SECRETARY OF THE MOSCOW PARTY COMMITTEE). BUT IT ALSO SUGGESTS THAT THERE ARE STILL PROBLEMS IN REACHING AGREEMENT ON CANDIDATES FOR FULL POLITBURO STATUS. DESPITE A NUMBER OF FAIRLY SHARP PRESS CRITICISMS, SHCHERBITSKY RETAINS HIS POSITION IN THE POLITBURO, AND IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO HOLD ON UNTIL HE CAN BE PRISED OUT OF

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HIS ENTRENCHED POSITION AT THE HEAD OF THE UKRAINIAN PARTY.

CONCLUSIONS

11. YEGOR YAKOVLEV, EDITOR OF MOSCOW NEWS AND ONE OF THE LEADING CAMPAIGNERS FOR GLASNOST', TOLD ME WHEN HE CAME TO MY RESIDENCE TO MEET YOU FOR LUNCH ON 16 FEBRUARY THAT HE THOUGHT THE BALANCE WAS NOW TIPPING AGAINST GLASNOST'. KOROTICH, THE EDITOR OF OGOONEK AND ANOTHER OF GLASNOST'S LEADING PROPONENTS, HAS BEEN SAYING MUCH THE SAME RECENTLY. THE EVIDENCE OF THIS PLENUM IS THAT THEY ARE PROBABLY RIGHT. IT HAS BEEN EVIDENT FOR SOME TIME THAT GLASNOST' IS PROCEEDING CONSIDERABLY MORE QUICKLY THAN ECONOMIC REFORM OR DEMOCRATISATION AND THAT THIS HAS BEEN CAUSING CONCERN. IT NOW SEEMS THAT GORBACHEV HAS ACCEPTED THIS POINT, AND THAT THERE WILL NOW, AT BEST, BE A PERIOD OF TREADING WATER WHILE EFFORTS ARE CONCENTRATED ON OVERCOMING BUREAUCRATIC OPPOSITION TO THE ECONOMIC REFORMS. BUT THE PARTY CONFERENCE WILL ALSO REQUIRE GORBACHEV TO CONCENTRATE ON THE ISSUE OF DEMOCRATISATION AND PARTY REFORM AND THIS, IT SEEMS, IS LIKELY TO PROVE JUST AS CONTROVERSIAL AS GLASNOST' WITH SOME OF HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE LEADERSHIP AND IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

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MY TELNOS 335 AND 338: CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM: GOBRACHEV'S
SPEECH

1. THE FULL TEXT OF GORBACHEV'S SPEECH IS PUBLISHED IN TODAY'S PRESS. IT RANGES WIDELY OVER INTERNAL AND FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS OF INTERNAL POLICY. WE ARE TELEGRAPHING SEPARATELY ON POINTS FROM THE FOREIGN POLICY SECTION OF THE SPEECH.

DIFFERENT VIEWS OF PERESTROIKA

2. GORBACHEV BEGAN BY LOOKING AT SOME KEY IDEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF PERESTROIKA. AT FIRST, HE SAID, MANY PEOPLE HAD FAILED TO UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF THESE CHANGES PERESTROIKA INVOLVED. THIS MEANT THAT THE PARTY HAD LITERALLY TO FIGHT FOR PERESTROIKA IN BOTH ITS ECONOMIC AND SPIRITUAL ASPECTS.

3. GORBACHEV SAID THAT THERE WERE DIFFERING VIEWS OF PERESTROIKA. SOME SAW IT AS SIMPLY A PROCESS OF COSMETIC ADJUSTMENT - AS SOMETHING SUPERFICIAL. OTHERS DEMANDED THE DISMANTLING OF THE WHOLE SYSTEM OF SOCIALISM AND ASKED THAT POLICIES FOLLOWED FOR DECADES SHOULD BE DECLARED TO HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN. OTHERS USED RADICAL PHRASEOLOGY BUT WANTED TO MISS OUT NECESSARY LOGICAL STAGES OF THE PROCESS.

4. GORBACHEV THEN SAID THAT THERE WERE SOME PEOPLE WHO EXPRESSED DOUBTS ABOUT PERESTROIKA, AND INTERPRETED IT AS A RETREAT FROM SOCIALISM. NOT SURPRISINGLY, SUCH TALK HAD LED TO THE APPEARANCE OF QUOTE "DEFENDERS" OF MARXIST LENINISM. THEY WERE MISTAKEN. PERESTROIKA DID NOT INVOLVE ANY RETREAT FROM SOCIALISM. BUT IT DID INVOLVE THE FIRM REJECTION OF THE SOVIET UNION'S DOGMATIC, BUREAUCRATIC AND VOLUNTARIST LEGACY FROM THE PAST.

HISTORY

5. GORBACHEV STRESSED THE NEED FOR A TRUTHFUL AND COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND STRUGGLES OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE. THIS MUST SHOW HOW PEOPLE REALLY LIVED AND WORKED, THEIR VICTORIES AND THEIR FAILURES, THE GLORIOUS AND THE TRAGIC, THE REVOLUTIONARY ENTHUSIASM OF THE PEOPLE, THE VIOLATION OF SOCIALIST LEGALITY AND AT TIMES THE CRIMINAL ACTS. BUT A MARXIST/LENINIST AND DIALECTICAL APPROACH WAS NEEDED IN WHICH THERE WOULD BE NO ONE-SIDEDNESS. THE ANALYSIS OF HISTORY NEEDED TIME. SOME PEOPLE WANTED TO LOOK TOO QUICKLY AT THE CLOSED PAGES OF THE PAST. THIS ONLY RESULTED IN SUPERFICIAL WORK. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND THE PRESS RECEIVED MANY LETTERS FROM PEOPLE CONCERNED ABOUT ONE SIDED APPROACHES TO HISTORY. THE AIM, GORBACHEV STRESSED, MUST BE TO CREATE CONDITIONS FOR CALM AND OBJECTIVE WORK WHICH WOULD INVOLVE THE PEOPLE AS A WHOLE IN DISCUSSING HISTORICAL ISSUES.

DEMOCRATISATION

6. GORBACHEV STRESSED THAT THE PARTY MUST UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS ONLY THROUGH DEMOCRATISATION THAT THE HUMAN FACTOR CAN BE BROUGHT INTO PLAY AND THAT APATHY CAN BE OVERCOME. BUT THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO BECAME NERVOUS AND ISSUED WARNINGS THAT DEMOCRACY COULD TURN INTO CHAOS. IN GENERAL THESE WARNINGS WERE THE RESULT OF THEIR OWN SELFISH CONCERNS, NOT OF THEIR CONCERN FOR A SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. PARTY OFFICIALS STILL TRIED TO PUT ARTIFICIAL LIMITS ON GLASNOST AND DEMOCRACY. PARTY OFFICIALS MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE PARTY CAN ONLY ENSURE ITS LEADING ROLE IF IT ADOPTS DEMOCRATIC METHODS OF WORK.

PRESS CRITICISM

7. PRESS AND TELEVISION HAVE BEEN TURNING THE SPOTLIGHT OF GLASNOST ON THOSE WHO ARE RESISTING AND HINDERING PERESTROIKA. THIS WAS HEALTHY. BUT FROM TIME TO TIME JOURNALS AND NEWSPAPERS MADE MISTAKES AND COULD NOT RESIST SENSATIONALISING. THERE WERE STILL TOO FEW POSITIVE ACCOUNTS OF THE PROGRESS OF PERESTROIKA.

CULTURE

8. GORBACHEV STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING A RICH AND VARIED CULTURE AS PART OF THE PROCESS OF PERESTROIKA. BUT HE SAID THAT HE AGREED WITH THOSE AT THE PLENUM WHO HAD SPOKEN ABOUT THE IMPERMISSIBILITY OF A LIGHT-HEARTED APPROACH TO ISSUES OF CULTURE AND IDEOLOGY. IN THIS AREA, PERHAPS PARTICULARLY IN THIS AREA, ACTIONS HAD TO BE GUIDED BY MARXIST/LENINIST PRINCIPLES.

NATIONALITIES

9. GORBACHEV DID NOT DWELL ON THIS ISSUE, BUT RECOMMENDED THAT A FUTURE PLENUM SHOULD DEVOTE ITSELF TO THE SUBJECT.

ECONOMIC REFORM

10. GORBACHEV THEN TURNED TO THE ECONOMY AND THE ECONOMIC REFORM PROGRAMME. HE NOTED THAT THE MOVE OVER TO KHOZRASCHET (SELF-ACCOUNTING) HAD ONLY JUST BEGUN, AND THAT OTHER KEY ELEMENTS IN THE REFORM PROGRAMME SUCH AS THE INTRODUCTION OF WHOLESALE TRADING DIRECTLY BETWEEN ENTERPRISES, AND PRICE REFORM STILL LAY AHEAD. EVEN SO, HE SAID, THE REFORM PROGRAMME WAS ALREADY MEETING PROBLEMS. THE BRAKING MECHANISM HAD STILL TO BE FULLY OVERCOME. THERE WAS STILL TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO INDICATORS OF GROSS OUTPUT, AND THERE WERE CASES WHEN INSTRUCTIONS WERE ISSUED TO FIRMS WHICH WENT CONTRARY TO THE NEW LAW ON STATE ENTERPRISES. THE ATTACHMENT TO THE OLD SYSTEM WAS SO STRONG THAT EVEN IN CASES WHERE FIRMS WERE PROFITABLY PRODUCING ITEMS IN GREAT DEMAND THEY DID NOT PURSUE THIS BUT OPTED FOR THE QUIET LIFE INSTEAD. GORBACHEV WARNED THAT IF THESE OLD FASHIONED ATTITUDES WERE NOT OVERCOME THEN THE REFORMS WOULD NOT HAVE THE NECESSARY EFFECT. THE DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATIVE AND INDIVIDUAL LABOUR ACTIVITY, THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW FAMILY AND OTHER UNITS IN AGRICULTURE WAS MEETING PROBLEMS AND BEING SUBJECTED TO ARTIFICIAL DELAY. RADICAL IMPROVEMENTS WERE STILL NEEDED IN THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ECONOMY. THERE WERE STILL PEOPLE WHO PLAYED AT INTRODUCING REFORMS, AND OTHERS WHO WERE OPPOSED TO THE VERY CONCEPT AND THE REFORM AND AIMED TO SABOTAGE AND DISCREDIT THE NEW METHODS. GORBACHEV WARNED THAT THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE TO THESE REFORMS. IT WOULD BE IMPERMISSIBLE, TO LET THEM BE STOPPED HALF WAY OR ROLLED BACK.

11. GORBACHEV ALSO STRONGLY ATTACKED THE CONTINUED ATTACHMENT TO THE IDEA OF 'LEVELLING OUT' OF WAGES. IT WAS HARDLY A SECRET HE SAID THAT MANY RECEIVED WAGES SIMPLY FOR TURNING UP AT WORK WITHOUT CONTRIBUTING ANYTHING. BUT AS SOON AS PEOPLE IN NEW SELF-ACCOUNTING COLLECTIVES BEGAN INCREASING OUTPUT AND THEREBY INCREASING THEIR INCOME THERE WERE ANGRY CRIES. PEOPLE MUST LEARN THAT LEVELLING OUT WAS A REFLECTION OF PETTY BOURGEOISE VIEWS AND HAD NOTHING IN COMMON WITH MARXIST LENINISM. THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF SOCIALISM 'FROM EACH ACCORDING TO HIS ABILITIES, TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS LABOUR' MUST BE APPLIED.

12. GORBACHEV THEN REMINDED HIS AUDIENCE OF THE PARLOUS STATE OF THE ECONOMY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1980S - SOMETHING HE SAID WHICH HE HAD NEEDED TO DO ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1980S GROWTH RATES HAD FALLEN AND HAD REACHED A CRITICAL POINT. BUT, AS HAD SUBSEQUENTLY BECOME CLEAR, EVEN WHAT GROWTH THERE WAS HAD BEEN BASED ON UNHEALTHY AND TEMPORARY FACTORS. HE CITED IN PARTICULAR THE HIGH WORLD OIL PRICE AT THE TIME AND THE UNJUSTIFIED EXPANSION OF THE PRODUCTION OF ALCOHOL. IF ONE ELIMINATED THESE FACTORS, THEN THERE HAD BEEN NO REAL GROWTH IN NATIONAL INCOME DURING THE WHOLE FOUR FIVE YEAR PLANS LEADING UP TO THE BEGINNING OF THE 1980S. FROM THIS POINT NATIONAL INCOME HAD EVEN BEGUN TO DECLINE. ONLY NOW HE SAID WAS ECONOMIC GROWTH BEGINNING ON A HEALTHY BASIS.

13. BUT THERE WERE STILL SERIOUS PROBLEMS. THE CUT BACK IN THE SALE OF ALCOHOLIC PRODUCTS HAD COST THE STATE MORE THAN 37 BILLION ROUBLES OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, WHILE RECEIPTS FROM REVENUES FROM THE SALE OF IMPORTED GOODS HAD DECLINED BY 9 BILLION ROUBLES FROM 1985-7 BECAUSE OF SHORTAGES OF HARD CURRENCY.

14. GORBACHEV THEN DEALT WITH 3 PARTICULAR AREAS OF THE ECONOMY - THE FOOD PROGRAMME, HOUSING AND THE PRODUCTION OF CONSUMER GOODS. SHORTCOMINGS IN THE LAST OF THESE WAS A MATTER FOR PARTICULAR CONCERN. THERE HAD BEEN NO TANGIBLE IMPROVEMENT IN THE QUALITY OF CONSUMER GOODS AND CONSUMER DEMAND WAS FAR FROM BEING SATISFIED. THIS HAD TO BE CHANGED QUICKLY. THE WAY THIS PROBLEM WAS HANDLED WOULD, GORBACHEV STRESSED, LARGELY DETERMINE PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS PERESTROIKA.

POLITICAL REFORM

15. GORBACHEV STRESSED THE INTER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMIC REFORM, POLITICAL REFORM, DEMOCRATISATION AND GLASNOST. THEY WERE ALL LINKS IN THE SAME CHAIN. THE POLITICAL SYSTEM NEEDED OVERHAULING. THIS DID NOT MEAN REPLACING THE EXISTING SYSTEM, BUT SUPPLEMENTING IT WITH NEW STRUCTURES. THIS ISSUE HAD TO BE THOROUGHLY DISCUSSED WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE PARTY CONFERENCE. THE MAIN PROBLEM WAS TO CREATE A MECHANISM IN WHICH DEMOCRATIC CONTROL WOULD BE CLEARLY EXERCISED, AND TO WORK OUT APPROPRIATE LEGAL PROCEDURES WHICH WOULD AT LEAST SERIOUSLY RESTRICT THE ELEMENT OF SUBJECTIVITY AND CHANCE (SLUCHAINOST) IN THE DECISION MAKING SYSTEM. AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE TYPE OF REFORM THAT WAS NEEDED GORBACHEV CITED THE FURTHER DEMOCRATISATION OF THE SYSTEM OF LOCAL SOVIETS. HE ADDED THAT IT WAS ALSO NECESSARY TO THINK ABOUT THE

ROLE OF THE USSR SUPREME SOVIET AND INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF ITS WORK. THERE ALSO HAD TO BE CLEARER DELIMITATION OF THE FUNCTIONS OF PARTY AND STATE BODIES. THE LEADING ROLE OF THE PARTY WAS AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION FOR THE FUNCTIONING AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIALIST SOCIETY. IN CONDITIONS OF PERESTROIKA AND DEMOCRATISATION THE LENINIST TEACHING ABOUT THE PARTY AND ITS ACTIVITIES MUST BE REVIVED. CAREFULLY THOUGHT OUT PROPOSALS ON THESE ISSUES HAD TO BE WORKED OUT IN TIME FOR THE PARTY CONFERENCE.

16. IN CONCLUSION GORBACHEV NOTED THAT PERESTROIKA HAD MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS OVER THE PAST 3 YEARS BUT THAT THERE WAS STILL A LONG WAY TO GO. MANY DIFFICULT PROBLEMS STILL REMAINED TO BE RESOLVED. AS THE COUNTRY APPROACHED THE 19TH PARTY CONFERENCE THERE HAD TO BE A THOROUGH ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE PAST THREE YEARS, AND IN PARTICULAR OF THE FIRST MONTHS OF THE OPERATION OF THE NEW LAW ON THE ENTERPRISE. FUTURE TASKS FOR THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATISATION AND ECONOMIC REFORM HAD TO BE CAREFULLY DEFINED, AND CONCRETE DECISIONS WERE NEEDED ON HOW TO IMPROVE BOTH THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AND THE PARTY IN ITS ROLE AS THE POLITICAL AVANTGARD.

17. COMMENT FOLLOWS.

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GORBACHEV'S SPEECH TO CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM, 18 FEBRUARY:
FOREIGN POLICY AND ARMS CONTROL

SUMMARY

1. A DEFENSIVE, LACK-LUSTRE JUSTIFICATION OF ARMS CONTROL POLICY, MAXIMISING THE SUCCESS OF THE INF TREATY. UK AND FRANCE CRITICISED. NEW THINKING IS GIVEN GOOD LENINIST CREDENTIALS, AND SAID TO BE ESSENTIAL.

DETAIL

ARMS CONTROL

2. GORBACHEV SAID ARMS CONTROL HAD BEEN AN EARLY PRIORITY FOR THE PARTY. THE INITIATIVES PUT FORWARD BY THE SOVIET UNION HAD NOT BEEN AD-HOC, BUT HAD BEEN GIVEN A 'SOUND, LONG-TERM SCIENTIFIC BASIS'.

3. THE INF TREATY WAS DESCRIBED IN FAMILIAR TERMS AS THE 'BEGINNING OF REAL DISARMAMENT'. GORBACHEV ADDED 'BUT IT IS ALSO A RESULT. A RESULT OF THE STRUGGLE OF SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, OTHER PEACE-LOVING AND PROGRESSIVE STATES, MASS POPULAR MOVEMENTS, THE UN, THE NON-ALIGNED.....OF THE ACTIVITY OF LEADERS OF SCIENCE, CULTURE, THE CHURCH.....OF THE COMMON-SENSE OF POLITICIANS BUSINESSMEN AND THE MILITARY. THE TREATY IS SOME KIND OF INIDCATOR OF THE POTENTIAL FOR PEACE'.

4. HE THEN CAUTIONED THAT THERE WAS NO CAUSE FOR COMPLACENCY. WITHIN DAYS OF THE SUMMIT EUPHORIA, 'OPPONENTS OF NORMALISING RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION' WERE TRYING TO RALLY SUPPORT. GORBACHEV PAID A MIXED TRIBUTE TO THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION. 'THE ADMINISTRATION IS KEEPING ITS WORD AND SUPPORTING THE TREATY. BUT AT THE SAME TIME IT ECHOES THE EXTREME RIGHT IN ANTI-SOVIET, ANTI-COMMUNIST RHETORIC,...AND ALSO IN DEEDS. WE HAVE AGAIN WITNESSED PROVOCATIONS ON OUR BORDERS. SOMEONE CLEARLY DOES NOT

LIKE THE ATMOSPHERE CREATED BY THE VISIT TO THE USA.''

5. THERE WAS SHARP CRITICISM OF THE EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF NATO. 'THEY ARE HURRYING TO ARRANGE COMPENSATION FOR THE MISSILES COVERED BY THE TREATY. THEY PLAN TO MODERNISE OTHER TYPES OF WEAPONS,.....CYNICALLY ARGUING THAT THEY ARE NOT ENCOMPASSED BY IT. WE HAVE ONCE AGAIN HEARD FROM LONDON, FROM PARIS, AND FROM NATO HQ A CATEGORICAL 'NO' TO GIVING UP NUCLEAR WEAPONS EVEN IN THE DISTANT FUTURE. APPROVAL OF A START TREATY IS ACCOMPANIED BY STATEMENTS THAT FRANCE AND BRITAIN ARE NOT AT ALL PREPARED TO STOP INCREASING THEIR NUCLEAR WEAPONS. QUITE THE REVERSE.''

6. GORBACHEV THEN COMMENTED ON THOSE URGING CAUTION IN THE WEST, WHO WERE SUSPICIOUS OF THE 'DIPLOMACY OF SMILES'. THEY WERE TRYING TO PREVENT PROGRESS ON DISARMAMENT AND ALSO WERE STEPPING UP THE IDEOLOGICAL ATTACK, 'TO BRING THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE OVER THE QUESTION OF PERESTROIKA AND DISARMAMENT INTO OUR TERRITORY, INTO OUR MIDST.' HOWEVER, NEW THINKING AND OTHER STEPS WHICH UNDERMINDED THE 'ENEMY IMAGE' WOULD OVERCOME THIS.

NEW THINKING

7. GORBACHEV SPOKE AT LENGTH IN DEFENCE OF NEW THINKING, WHICH, LIKE PERESTROIKA (LAST WORD UNDERLINED) HAD BEEN THE NECESSARY RESULT OF THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE LEADERSHIP IN 1985. 'THERE IS CONFUSION IN THE MINDS OF SOME PEOPLE ABOUT THE ESSENCE OF NEW THINKING. IT IS NOT SURPRISING. THE PROBLEMS ARE CONSIDERABLE'. AGAINST THIS DOCTRINE OF MILITARISM, THE SOVIET UNION WAS ADVANCING THE IDEAS OF 'A BALANCE OF INTERESTS AND EQUAL MUTUAL SECURITY'. HE ASSERTED THAT IT WAS THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD, AND WAS A MORAL ASSET TO THE SOVIET UNION.

8. HE TOLD THE PLENUM THAT NEW THINKING WAS THE CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF THE REALITIES SUBJECT TO ANALYSIS BY DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM. IT RELIED ON THE LENINIST THEORY OF IMPERIALISM. NEW THINKING WAS WELL SUITED TO SOCIALISM'S 'HISTORIC MISSION' OF CREATING NEW REALITIES WHICH WOULD BE AN INSUPERABLE BARRIER AGAINST AGRESSION AND INTERVENTION. GORBACHEV CONCLUDED BY STRESSING THAT THE SUCCESS OF PERESTROIKA (LAST WORD UNDERLINED) WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT A FOREIGN POLICY BASED ON NEW THINKING.