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FM WASHINGTON
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
OF 1286
OF 182315Z MAY 88

ADVANCE COPY *mt*

MOSCOW SUMMIT: MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER
SUMMARY

1. RECOMMENDATION THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SEND A MESSAGE TO
THE PRESIDENT BEFORE THE MOSCOW SUMMIT.

DETAIL

2. I IMAGINE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER MAY WANT TO BE IN TOUCH
WITH THE PRESIDENT BEFORE HE LEAVES WASHINGTON ON 25 MAY FOR THE
MOSCOW SUMMIT, AND WORK ON A DRAFT MESSAGE MAY ALREADY BE IN
HAND. YOU MAY FIND USEFUL SOME COMMENT FROM HERE.

3. FIRST, I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD WELCOME (AND
POSSIBLY EXPECT) A MESSAGE OF SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT AS HE SETS
OFF FOR THE FIRST VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION BY A US PRESIDENT FOR
FOURTEEN YEARS. AND IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE, GIVEN
THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL BE SEEING THE PRESIDENT IN LONDON ON
HIS WAY BACK.

4. IN ADDITION TO ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT, WE NEED TO
CONSIDER WHETHER THERE ARE ANY PITFALLS AGAINST WHICH WARNING
SHOULD BE GIVEN. I DO NOT EXPECT ANOTHER REYKJAVIK, BUT THE
CHANCES OF UNWELCOME SURPRISES MAY NEVERTHELESS BE A LITTLE
HIGHER THAN THEY WERE AT THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT LAST DECEMBER.
OPPONENTS OF THE INF TREATY IN THE SENATE WILL NOT, IN MY
VIEW, SUCCEED IN PREVENTING RATIFICATION: BUT, DESPITE
OPTIMISTIC NOISES FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT, THEY MAY STILL DELAY
IT SUFFICIENTLY BOTH TO REMOVE A FORMAL BUT ATTRACTIVE ITEM OF
BUSINESS FROM THE SUMMIT AGENDA, AND TO PUT REAGAN ON THE
DEFENSIVE IN HIS TALKS WITH GORBACHEV. AT THE SAME TIME, THE
PRESIDENT IS RELIABLY INFORMED TO BE DISAPPOINTED ABOUT THE RECENT
SLOW PROGRESS IN THE START NEGOTIATIONS: AND HE MAY PRIVATELY
FIND EQUALLY DISAPPOINTING THE WORTHY BUT UNEXCITING BITS AND
PIECES WHICH HIS ADVISERS ARE COBBLING TOGETHER TO FILL THE GAPS.

5. THAT IS A BACKGROUND AGAINST WHICH GORBACHEV'S ADVISERS MIGHT
WELL BE TEMPTED TO COME UP WITH A SURPRISE, ON WHAT WILL PROBABLY
BE GORBACHEV'S LAST OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE THE PRESIDENT DIRECTLY
IN ARMS CONTROL DISCUSSIONS. THE RISK IS NOT SO MUCH THAT THE
PRESIDENT MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO COMMIT HIMSELF TO AN ILL-THOUGHT
THROUGH FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON START, BUT THAT THE RHETORIC MIGHT
GO BADLY WRONG. FOR EXAMPLE, GORBACHEV MIGHT SUGGEST A HIGH-

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SOUNDING DECLARATION ON RIDDING THE WORLD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, DESIGNED TO EXPLOIT THE PRESIDENT'S NOT VERY DEEPLY SUBMERGED FEELINGS ABOUT THE ISSUE AND TO INFLUENCE THE PUBLIC DEBATE DURING THE US ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND IN THE WEST MORE GENERALLY.

6. PERHAPS THE BEST ANTIDOTE WOULD BE TO ENCOURAGE THE PRESIDENT TO SEE THE HISTORICAL ACHIEVEMENT NOT IN THE MOSCOW SUMMIT ITSELF, BUT IN THE AGGREGATE PRODUCT OF EIGHT YEARS OF FIRM LEADERSHIP. THE FORMULA WHICH HAS WORKED (OVER AFGHANISTAN AS WELL AS ON ARMS CONTROL), AND FOR WHICH THE PRESIDENT CAN BE GIVEN SOME CREDIT, IS BASED ON STRONG DEFENCES AND A DETERMINED BUT COOL-HEADED APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS. WESTERN GOVERNMENTS WILL COME UNDER PRESSURE OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS TO RESPOND TO GORBACHEV BY DILUTING ONE OR BOTH OF THESE TWO ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS. THE RISK FOR THE ALLIANCE WILL BE NOT TOO LITTLE DIALOGUE, BUT TOO LITTLE ATTENTION TO WHAT THE NATO SUMMIT AGREED WAS THE NECESSARY OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN: QUOTE A STRATEGY OF DETERRENCE BASED UPON AN APPROPRIATE MIX OF ADEQUATE AND EFFECTIVE NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL FORCES WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO BE KEPT UP TO DATE WHERE NECESSARY UNQUOTE.

7. A MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TAKING THIS SOMEWHAT WIDER PERSPECTIVE COULD EXPRESS STRONG SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN'S POLICIES AND UNDERLINE THE NEED BOTH TO GUARD AGAINST UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS ON THE DISARMAMENT FRONT AND TO CONCENTRATE ATTENTION ON WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE TO COMPLETE THE AGENDA (INCLUDING CONVENTIONAL AND CW) AGREED WITH THE ALLIANCE FOLLOWING THE CAMP DAVID MEETING. OUR SUPPORT FOR INF RATIFICATION AND FOR A 50 PER CENT START AGREEMENT COULD HELPFULLY BE RECALLED IN THIS CONTEXT AS COULD ANOTHER POINT OF COMMON GROUND BETWEEN US: THAT THE ESSENTIAL ON START IS TO GET A GOOD TREATY, EVEN IF THAT TAKES A LITTLE LONGER.

8. THE MESSAGE MIGHT CONCLUDE BY LOOKING FORWARD TO THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS WITH REAGAN IN LONDON BOTH THE CHALLENGES AND THE OPPORTUNITIES WHICH GORBACHEV WILL PRESENT TO THE ALLIANCE OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS, AS WELL AS TO HEAR THE PRESIDENTS IMPRESSIONS OF THE SITUATION IN MOSCOW.

9. THE PRESIDENT LEAVES WASHINGTON ON 25 MAY. ANY MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD THEREFORE BE DELIVERED HERE BY 24 MAY AT THE LATEST.

10. FCO PLEASE ADVANCE TO POWELL (NO. 10).

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PAGE 2
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3

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PAGE 3
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