

CONFIDENTIAL
FM MOSCOW
TO DESKBY 051700Z FCO
TELNO 1816
OF 051531Z NOVEMBER 88
INFO IMMEDIATE UKDEL CSCE VIENNA
INFO PRIORITY BONN, PARIS, WASHINGTON

CALL ON SHEVARDNADZE: CSCE ISSUES

SUMMARY

1. SHEVARDNADZE PITCHES FOR THE MOSCOW CONFERENCE. WITHOUT IT, THE RUSSIANS WOULD OPPOSE OTHER FOLLOW-UPS INCLUDING PARIS, COPENHAGEN, AND LONDON.

DETAIL

2. I WAS ASKED TO CALL ON SHEVARDNADZE AT TWELVE HOURS NOTICE ON 5 NOVEMBER. MIFT (NOT TO ALL) RECORDS THE BILATERAL PART OF THE CONVERSATION. SHEVARDNADZE SAID HE HAD A SPECIAL MESSAGE FOR YOU. THE VIENNA MEETING WAS NOW ENTERING ITS FINAL STAGES. THE CO-ORDINATOR'S DRAFT TEXTS FOR THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT WERE GOOD. THE CST MANDATE WAS ALMOST FINISHED. THE SOVIET UNION WAS LOOKING AT A FORMULA TO RESOLVE THE OUTSTANDING DIFFERENCES ON THE ZONE. WE SHOULD ALL WORK HARD TO CONCLUDE SOON.

MOSCOW CONFERENCE

3. SHEVARDNADZE SAID WE MUST ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS. APART FROM CST, THERE WERE 9 OR 10 PROPOSALS. THE SOVIET UNION THOUGHT THIS WAS A MANAGEABLE FIGURE, SINCE NOT ALL WOULD REQUIRE INVOLVEMENT AT FOREIGN MINISTER OR HEAD OF GOVERNMENT LEVEL. HE RAN THROUGH THE VARIOUS PROPOSALS WHICH THE RUSSIANS SUPPORTED, INCLUDING THE LONDON INFORMATION FORUM 'ON A BASIS OF RECIPROCITY'.

4. THE RUSSIANS SUPPORTED A THREE-STAGE CDH. THEY WELCOMED A CONFERENCE IN PARIS TO MARK THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, AND ALSO SUPPORTED PART TWO IN COPENHAGEN. THEY HAD PROPOSED MOSCOW FOR PART THREE IN 1991. IT WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE TIME. THE REFORMS OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM, CRIMINAL CODE AND PARLIAMENT WOULD BE IN PLACE. THE 28TH CONGRESS WOULD HAVE BEEN AND GONE. IF THE WEST WAS INTERESTED IN THE DEMOCRATISATION OF SOVIET SOCIETY,

THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE IT FOR THEMSELVES.

5. BUT IT WAS A MISTAKE TO THINK THE RUSSIANS WOULD BE FLEXIBLE ABOUT A MOSCOW CONFERENCE. IF THE WEST DID NOT AGREE TO IT, THE RUSSIANS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO AGREE TO PARIS OR LONDON. THE FRENCH AND ITALIANS HAD AGREED TO MOSCOW. THE GERMANS WERE DISPOSED TO ATTEND. THE AMERICANS HAD THEIR CRITERIA, WHICH THE RUSSIANS DID NOT LIKE, BUT AT LEAST KNEW. WHY WERE THE BRITISH SO HARD IN THEIR OPPOSITION?

6. I SAID THAT SHEVARDNADZE HAD JUST EXPLAINED WHY THE RUSSIANS HAD THEIR OWN GOOD REASONS FOR WANTING TO REFORM THEIR SOCIETY. GENUINE PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS WAS ONE THING. THE TACTICS FOR NEGOTIATING THE END GAME AT VIENNA WAS ANOTHER. THE TWO SHOULD BE KEPT SEPARATE. NEVERTHELESS, THE WESTERN PARTICIPANTS IN ANY CDH FOLLOW-UP WOULD INEVITABLY AND JUSTIFIABLY HAVE EXPECTATIONS AND CONDITIONS. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S POSITION HAD BEEN CLEARLY SET OUT IN RECENT STATEMENTS BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND YOURSELF. KOHL TOO HAD SET CLEAR CONDITIONS DURING HIS RECENT VISIT. THESE EXPECTATIONS OF THE SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE, AND OF THE CONDITIONS OF OPENNESS AND FREE EXPRESSION IN ANY MOSCOW CONFERENCE WOULD NEED TO BE SATISFIED. SHEVARDNADZE SAID THAT SUCH PRECONDITIONS WERE HURTFUL TO SOVIET NATIONAL PRIDE. HE ASKED ME TO MAKE THIS POINT TO YOU PARTICULARLY.

CST

7. SHEVARDNADZE ALSO WANTED ME TO PASS ON AN IDEA, HE HAD ALREADY FLOATED WITH GENSCHER. IF WE COULD REACH AGREEMENT AT VIENNA, THE CLOSURE OF THE MEETING SHOULD BE MARKED AT AN APPROPRIATE SENIOR POLITICAL LEVEL. THE 23'S DISCUSSIONS ON ''CONVENTIONAL ARMS AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES'' COULD THEN BE LAUNCHED AT A PURELY FORMAL MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS.

COMMENT

8. SHEVARDNADZE HAS ALREADY SAID MUCH OF THIS TO YOU IN NEW YORK. HE GOT ANIMATED ABOUT WESTERN CLAIMS ON THE SOVIET UNION'S DOMESTIC POLITICS. HE PUT SOME ICE IN HIS VOICE WHEN THREATENING TO BLOCK THE WESTERN PROPOSALS FOR FOLLOW-UP. BUT HE DID NOT SERIOUSLY INDICATE THAT THE MOSCOW CONFERENCE HAS GAINED IN IMPORTANCE FOR THE SOVIET UNION. I GUESS HE WAS PLAYING PREDICTABLE HARDBALL AS THE VIENNA DISCUSSIONS DRAW TO A CLOSE.

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ADDITIONAL

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MR P J WESTON CAB OFF

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