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UKMIS NEW YORK TELNOS 1612 AND 1636 : GORBACHEV'S VISIT TO
NEW YORK, 6 - 9 DECEMBER

SUMMARY

1. GORBACHEV'S VISIT TO NEW YORK GIVES HIM OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND THE CHANCE TO SEEK ASSURANCES ON THE CONTINUITY OF US POLICY. THE WORKING LUNCH WITH REAGAN AND BUSH HAS A SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE : AND WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO RUN OVER THE MAIN CURRENT ISSUES IN GENERAL TERMS. BUT THE FORMAT AND THE TIMING MAKE IT UNLIKELY THAT NEW GROUND WILL BE BROKEN, OR ANY NEW UNDERTAKINGS GIVEN.

DETAIL

2. GORBACHEV ARRIVES IN NEW YORK ON 6 DECEMBER, EXACTLY A YEAR AFTER COMING HERE FOR THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT. ON THAT OCCASION THE SPOTLIGHT WAS ON THE BILATERAL US/SOVIET RELATIONSHIP. BUT THIS TIME, THE FLAVOUR WILL BE DIFFERENT. GORBACHEV'S ONLY CONTACT WITH THE US GOVERNMENT WILL BE THE WORKING LUNCH ON 7 DECEMBER WITH REAGAN AND BUSH ON GOVERNOR'S ISLAND (OFF THE SOUTHERN TIP OF MANHATTEN). FOR THE REST OF HIS TWO AND A HALF DAYS ON US SOIL, HE WILL BE OCCUPIED AT THE UN (WHERE HE MEETS THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND GIVES A MAJOR ADDRESS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 7 DECEMBER) AND IN OTHER PUBLIC DIPLOMACY PROJECTS (OPENING A SOVIET TRADE EXHIBITION, AND HOLDING A PRESS CONFERENCE AND A MEETING WITH US OPINION FORMERS.)

3. FOR AMERICANS, THE MAIN EVENT WILL NEVERTHELESS BE GOVERNOR'S ISLAND. IT WILL HAVE A STRONG SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE HERE : PRESIDENT REAGAN PASSING ON THE TORCH IN THE EAST/WEST RELATIONSHIP, WHERE HE IS SEEN TO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED MUCH IN RECENT YEARS. BUT KEEPING THAT SYMBOLISM IN LINE WITH THE POLITICAL FACT THAT REAGAN REMAINS PRESIDENT UNTIL 20 JANUARY HAS REQUIRED SOME CAREFUL STAGE-MANAGEMENT ON THE AMERICAN SIDE. ON PRESENT PLANS, THE US TEAM WILL BE STRICTLY FROM THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION : REAGAN, BUSH (NOMINALLY IN HIS CAPACITY AS VICE-PRESIDENT), SHULTZ, NSC ADVISER POWELL, AND WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF DUBERSTEIN. QUAYLE, BAKER AND SCOWCROFT, WHO HAVE NO STATUS AT PRESENT, WILL BE LEFT OUT.

4. THE WHITE HOUSE, HAUNTED BY MEMORIES OF REYKJAVIK, HAVE GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY TO EMPHASISE THAT THIS WILL NOT BE A NEGOTIATING SESSION. AS THE SPOKESMAN PUT IT THIS WEEK: QUOTE ONE PRESIDENT IS LEAVING OFFICE, SO HE IS NOT GOING TO HAVE PROMISES TO MAKE, AND ANOTHER PRESIDENT IS ABOUT TO TAKE OFFICE, AND IT IS UNLIKELY THAT HE'LL HAVE COMMITMENTS TO MAKE UNQUOTE. OUR CONTACTS TELL US THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO SUBSTANTIVE PREPARATORY WORK AT OFFICIAL LEVEL. THERE WILL BE NO SET AGENDA AND NO WORKING GROUPS. THE US ARE NOT EXPECTING A JOINT STATEMENT AFTERWARDS.

5. IN SHORT, THE MEETING WILL FALL SOMEWHERE BETWEEN A WORKING SESSION AT THE TOP LEVEL AND A PURELY SOCIAL OCCASION. IT WILL PERMIT A REVIEW OF THE TOPICS OF CURRENT INTEREST, BUT GIVEN THE LIMITED TIME, (UNDER THREE HOURS, INCLUDING INTERPRETATION) NECESSARILY IN GENERAL TERMS. THE NSC ARE BRIEFING THE PRESIDENT TO EXPECT THAT GORBACHEV WILL HAVE THE VIENNA CSCE MEETING AND AFGHANISTAN AT THE TOP OF HIS MIND. FOR HIS PART, THE PRESIDENT INTENDS TO COVER ALL THE MAIN HUMAN RIGHTS, ARMS CONTROL AND REGIONAL ISSUES.

6. THE MAIN WILD CARD FOR THOSE WRITING THE BRIEFS HERE IS THAT THE LUNCHTIME SESSION COMES IMMEDIATELY AFTER GORBACHEV'S ADDRESS TO THE UN. ACCORDING TO OUR CONTACTS, THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE NO HARD INFORMATION ON WHAT IT WILL CONTAIN, AND THE US TEAM AT LUNCH WILL THEREFORE HAVE TO REACT OFF-THE-CUFF IF GORBACHEV PULLS ANY EYE-CATCHING NEW RABBITS FROM HIS HAT. THERE IS A GOOD DEAL OF SPECULATION HERE ABOUT WHAT HE WILL SAY. APART FROM THE OBVIOUS PLUGS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND OTHER FAMILIAR SOVIET PROPAGANDA THEMES, AND SOME EFFORT TO EXPLOIT THE ARAFAT VISA ISSUE, FRONT RUNNERS HERE INCLUDE :

I) SOMETHING IN THE CONVENTIONAL FORCES FIELD. MOST OF OUR CONTACTS THINK AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN UNCONDITIONAL UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET FORCES FROM EASTERN EUROPE UNLIKELY. BUT GORBACHEV MIGHT MAKE AN IMPROVED OFFER OF ASYMMETRICAL REDUCTIONS, CONDITIONAL ON A MATCHING WESTERN RESPONSE:

II) SOME RE-PACKAGING OF EARLIER SOVIET PROPOSALS ON THE SETTLEMENT OF REGIONAL DISPUTES :

7. OUR CONTACTS ADD THAT ANY SUCH PROPOSAL IS LIKELY TO BE DESIGNED LARGELY FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY PURPOSES, AND SHOULD NOT BE TOO HARD FOR THE US TO HANDLE. ON SPECIFIC ISSUES, THEY EXPECT THE FOLLOWING TO BE RAISED AT GOVERNOR'S ISLAND:

I) HUMAN RIGHTS. THE PRESIDENT INTENDS TO LEAD OFF WITH THIS (AS HE ALWAYS DOES WITH GORBACHEV). OUR CONTACTS

- NOTE THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE ALREADY PREPARING THE GROUND (WITH THE LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS ON REFUSENIKS, AND THE END TO JAMMING RADIO LIBERTY) FOR A CLAIM THAT THEY ARE MAKING A MAJOR EFFORT TO MEET US CONDITIONS FOR A MOSCOW HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE. THEY EXPECT MORE SUCH ACTIVITY IN THE BUILD-UP TO NEW YORK, AND CONTINUE TO HEAR THAT GORBACHEV MAY BRING A LARGE GROUP OF SOVIET CITIZENS WITH HIM FOR PERMANENT SETTLEMENT HERE. THE PRESIDENT IS BRIEFED TO GIVE GORBACHEV CREDIT FOR THE PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN MADE RECENTLY (PARTICULARLY OVER JAMMING) BUT TO REITERATE THAT ALL THE US CONDITIONS WILL NEED TO BE FULFILLED BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATION WILL AGREE TO A MOSCOW CONFERENCE.
- II) ARMS CONTROL. THE PRESIDENT WILL TAKE STOCK OF THE POSITION REACHED IN START, SET OUT ONCE AGAIN US CONCERNS ON KRASNOYARSK, AND MAY WELL ALSO REFER TO CW PROLIFERATION. AS NOTED ABOVE, THE US EXPECT GORBACHEV TO RAISE CST.
- III) REGIONAL ISSUES. AFGHANISTAN IS AT THE TOP OF US MINDS. THE PRESIDENT IS BRIEFED TO MAKE CLEAR THAT IF THE RUSSIANS RENEGED ON THEIR COMMITMENT TO LEAVE AFGHANISTAN BY 15 FEBRUARY THE CONSEQUENCES FOR US/SOVIET RELATIONS WOULD BE SERIOUS. THE US EXPECT THAT, SUBJECT TO THE OUTCOME OF THE SOVIET/MUJAHEDDIN TALKS IN RIYADH, GORBACHEV MAY WELL REPEAT A PROPOSAL (ALREADY REJECTED ONCE BY THE US) TO ENLIST US HELP IN PUTTING TOGETHER A SUCCESSOR REGIME (WITHOUT NAJIB) WITH THE AIM OF AVOIDING A BLOODBATH WHEN THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL IS COMPLETE. THE US PRIORITY WILL BE TO KEEP UP THE PRESSURE FOR WITHDRAWAL.

THERE IS UNLIKELY TO BE TIME TO COVER MUCH MORE GROUND THAN THIS, GIVEN THE NEED ALSO FOR PLENTY OF WARM VALEDICTORY EXCHANGES.

8. FOR BUSH, THERE MAY BE SOME AWKWARDNESS, GIVEN THAT HE IS NOT YET PRESIDENT, AND CONSTRAINED FROM PUTTING HIS OWN STAMP ON THE PROCEEDINGS. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SESSION IS WELL TIMED TO ENABLE HIM TO CONSOLIDATE HIS PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GORBACHEV (THERE IS EXPECTED TO BE A SHORT PRIVATE SESSION WITH ONLY GORBACHEV, REAGAN AND BUSH PRESENT, PLUS AN INTERPRETER), WITHOUT HAVING TO MAKE ANY SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS ON POLICY. AS A RESULT BAKER AND SHEVARDNADZE SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET DOWN TO THE DETAILED WORK PROMPTLY AFTER THE INAUGURATION. IT SHOULD ALSO BE EASIER TO FEND OFF ANY PRESSURE FROM GORBACHEV FOR AN UNDULY EARLY FULL SUMMIT.
9. SHULTZ WILL FLY DIRECT FROM NEW YORK TO BRUSSELS, WHERE HE

WILL BRIEF THE NAC ON THE DISCUSSIONS THE FOLLOWING MORNING. WE ARE THEREFORE ASSURED OF A FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT OF THE PROCEEDINGS IN ADVANCE OF GORBACHEV'S ARRIVAL IN LONDON.

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