

RESTRICTED
FM MOSCOW
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 1975
OF 081606Z DECEMBER 88
INFO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK, CSCE POSTS, UKDEL NATO

UKMIS NEW YORK TELNO 1755 AND FCO TELNO 238 TO UKDEL NATO (NOT TO ALL).

GORBACHEV'S UN SPEECH : HUMAN RIGHTS.

1. GORBACHEV'S STATEMENT THAT THERE WERE NO LONGER ANY PEOPLE IN THE SOVIET UNION IMPRISONED FOR THEIR POLITICAL OR RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS HAD BEEN WIDELY EXPECTED. IT MAY BE SIGNIFICANT THAT THE LANGUAGE APPEARS TO BE MORE RESTRICTIVE THAN THE PHRASE "THOSE WHOM THE WEST REGARDS AS POLITICAL PRISONERS" WHICH HAD BEEN USED TO THE GERMANS DURING THE KOHL VISIT. IT IS ALSO NOT CLEAR WHETHER HIS STATEMENT APPLIES TO PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS. WE WILL TRY AND TOUCH BASE WITH THE US EMBASSY AND WITH UNOFFICIAL POLITICAL ACTIVISTS HERE FOR THEIR ASSESSMENT OF HOW THIS STATEMENT SQUARES WITH PRACTICE TO DATE. ON 7 DECEMBER THE US EMBASSY HAD ONLY HEARD OF THREE RECENT RELEASES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS.

2. THE OTHER MAIN POINT IN GORBACHEV'S REMARKS ON HUMAN RIGHTS WAS HIS ACCEPTANCE OF A TIME LIMIT FOR APPLICATION OF THE SECRECY RULE TO WOULD-BE EMIGRANTS. THE LENGTH OF THIS TIME LIMIT MAY IN PRACTICE EMERGE FROM NEGOTIATION IN VIENNA. THE RUSSIANS HAVE ALREADY ANNOUNCED THAT THEY INTEND TO LIFT SECURITY RESTRICTIONS ON 120 CASES, AND, AS WE HAVE REPORTED, SOME 50 REFUSEES HAD ALREADY BEEN INFORMED OF THIS BY 6 DECEMBER. ACCORDING TO THE LATEST LIST PROVIDED TO US HERE BY REFUSEE CONTACTS THIS WOULD STILL LEAVE SOME 50 REFUSEES DENIED VISAS ON SECRECY GROUNDS AND A FURTHER 120 OR SO DENIED VISAS FOR OTHER REASONS, EG. THE "POOR RELATIVES" CLAUSE.

BRAITHWAITE

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ADDITIONAL 4

NO 10 DOWNING ST

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