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GEORGIA: DISMISSAL OF REPUBLICAN LEADERS

SUMMARY

1. AS REPORTED BY TELEPHONE ON 14 APRIL, A PLENUM OF THE GEORGIAN PARTY ON THAT DAY ACCEPTED THE RESIGNATION OF PARTY FIRST SECRETARY PATIASHVILI. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GEORGIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS HAS ALSO BEEN REPLACED. EMOTIONAL AND SOMBRE PLEA BY SHEVARDNADZE TO THE GEORGIAN PARTY NOT TO DISRUPT PERESTROIKA.

DETAIL

2. PATIASHVILI HAS BEEN REPLACED AS PARTY SECRETARY BY THE RECENTLY APPOINTED GEORGIAN KGB CHIEF GIVI GUMBARIDZE. NORDARI CHITANAV, HAS REPLACED CHKHEIDZE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. THE FATE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PRESIDUM OF THE GEORGIAN SUKPREME SOVIET, WHO HAS ALSO OFFERED TO STEP DOWN, HAS YET TO BE DECIDED.

3. SHEVARDNADZE'S SPEECH TO THE GEORGIAN PLENUM ON 14 APRIL WAS SHOWN ON TELEVISION, AND WAS PUBLISHED IN THE CENTRAL PRESS ON 16 APRIL. HIS PERSONAL ANGUISH AT EVENTS IN HIS HOME REPUBLIC CAME THROUGH CLEARLY. IN HIS SPEECH, HE SOUGHT TO EXPLAIN THE REASONS FOR THE "BITTER" DECISION TO REPLACE PATIASHVILI, AND REPEATEDLY LINKED EVENTS SUCH AS THE GEORGIAN TRAGEDY AND THE FATE OF PERESTROIKA. THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF SHEVARDNADZE'S SALIENT POINTS:

- ON THEIR VISIT TO GEORGIA, HE AND RAZUMOVSKY HAD HAD THE TASK OF ESTABLISHING THE TRUTH AND ENSURING THAT THERE COULD BE NO REPETITION OF THIS TRAGEDY. THIS WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE PROCESSES TAKING PLACE IN THE COUNTRY. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TRAGEDY WENT FAR BEYOND GEORGIA. SO MANY HOPES FOR A BETTER FUTURE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WERE RIDING ON PERESTROIKA. NO ONE IN THE WORLD COULD BE INDIFFERENT TO THREATS TO PERESTROIKA, WHETHER THEY CAME FROM IRRESPONSIBLE PEOPLE

WHO TOOK ADVANTAGE OF DEMOCRATISATION AND GLASNOST: OR FROM THOSE ENTRUSTED WITH VARIOUS DUTIES WHO HAD NOT SHED THE FALSE PRINCIPLES OF THE PAST.

- SHEVARDNADZE QUOTED AT LENGTH THE REMARKS OF GORBACHEV (''THE ARCHITECT OF PERESTROIKA'') ABOUT THE DAMAGE DONE IN TBILISI TO THE INTERESTS OF PERESTROIKA.
- THE ''DIFFICULT DECISION'' (TO REPLACE PATIASHVILI) DEMONSTRATED ADHERENCE TO THE IDEAS OF DEMOCRACY AND READINESS TO FOLLOW THE PEOPLE'S WILL. ''BUT DEMOCRACY WITHOUT SELF-DISCIPLINE IS THE ESSENCE OF ANARCHY AND FREEDOM WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITY IS SUICIDAL.... EVEN THE BROADEST RIVER HAS BANKS.'' ANY POPULAR MOVEMENT MUST HAVE ITS LIMITATIONS.
- EVERY PERSON BEARING GUILT FOR 9 APRIL WOULD BE NAMED.
- PATIASHVILI HAD NOT DECIDED ALONE TO USE FORCE AND INTRODUCE THE CURFEW. MANY OF THOSE NOW CRITICISING HIM HAD CALLED FOR THIS. BUT HIS RESIGNATION WAS AN EXAMPLE OF THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY WHICH PERESTROIKA WAS TRYING TO INCULCATE IN EVERY COMMUNIST.
- ''OUR COUNTRY'' HAD SURVIVED THE STRAINS OF GENERATIONS BY PRESERVING ITS ''SPIRITUAL, MORAL AND INTERNATIONAL POTENTIAL. IF WE DO NOT HAVE THIS, PERESTROIKA WOULD NOT STAND EVEN THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE OF SUCCESS''.
- IN A CENTRAL PASSAGE OF HIS SPEECH, SHEVARDNADZE HELD OUT THE PROMISE OF A BETTER FUTURE IF THE CURRENT REFORM PROCESSES COULD BE CARRIED THROUGH. HE NOTED HOW HE HIMSELF HAD JUST CAST HIS FIRST EVER VOTE WHICH REQUIRED A CHOICE OF CANDIDATE. HE HAD TAKEN PART IN VERY SHARP DEBATES IN GEORGIA WHICH WOULD NOT HITHERTO HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE. BUT THE ELEMENTARY READINESS TO HEAR AN OPPONENT'S OPINION WAS ABSENT, AND SOME VIEWS HAD VERGED HYSTERIA. ''WE ARE STILL FAR FROM THAT CONDITION, WHICH IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF DEMOCRACY, WHEN EVERY CITIZEN HOLDS DEMOCRACY DEAR AND DEFENDS IT.''
- HE THEN ATTACKED UNOFFICIAL GROUPS, MOTIVATED BY CAREERIST AIMS, WHICH HAD EVEN PUT YOUNG SCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE FRONT RANK OF ILLEGAL DEMONSTRATIONS.
- THE WORK OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY WAS CLEARLY INADEQUATE. THE PARTY HAD NOT TAKEN SUFFICIENT ACCOUNT OF THE BALANCE OF SOCIAL INTERESTS.

THERE WAS AN ABNORMAL BARRIER BETWEEN THE PARTY AND A PART OF THE POPULATION. IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT TO DEVELOP A "CULTURE OF DIALOGUE". THE LOCAL LEADERSHIP HAD NOT LIVED UP TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF SOCIETY.

- SHEVARDNADZE FOUND IT HARD TO JUSTIFY THE LOCAL PARTY'S DECISION TO RESORT TO TROOPS, "AND TO TALK TO THE PEOPLE FROM BEHIND TANKS AND ARMoured PERSONNEL CARRIERS". THE PARTY HAD ACTED TOO HASTILY, WITHOUT EXHAUSTING ALTERNATIVE COURSES. BUT HE SPECIFICALLY EXEMPTED THE LOCAL MILITARY COMMANDER, COLONEL GENERAL RODIONOV, FROM BLAME. RODIONOV HAD ARGUED AGAINST THE DECISION.

- HE HOPED THE CURFEW COULD BE LIFTED SOON, PERHAPS AS EARLY AS 17 APRIL IF SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES AND WORK PLACES RETURNED TO NORMAL THEN.

4. IN SEPARATE REPORTS, THE PRESS HAVE REPORTED THE DAY OF MOURNING ON 16 APRIL IN TBILISI, AND CONTINUING TENSION ARISING FROM HOOLIGAN ELEMENTS AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF PROVOCATIVE LEAFLETS. THE CURFEW IS CAUSING PROBLEMS IN THE MARKETS. REPRESENTATIVES OF UNOFFICIAL ORGANISATIONS HAVE BEEN PRESENT AT POST-MORTEMS.

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