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PRIME MINISTER'S STOPOVER TO MOSCOW: SOVIET MEDIA COVERAGE

SUMMARY

1. FULL COVERAGE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT. HER SUPPORT FOR GORBACHEV REPORTED PROMINENTLY.

DETAIL

NEWSPAPER COVERAGE

2. THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH GORBACHEV WAS REPORTED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF PRAVDA OF 24 SEPTEMBER. THE REPORT BEGAN BY DESCRIBING THE MEETING AS 'A CONTINUATION OF A REGULAR DIALOGUE WHICH HAS BEEN TAKING PLACE FOR ALMOST FIVE YEARS'. THE TWO LEADERS AGREED THAT 'THE VERY EXISTENCE OF SUCH DIRECT, HONEST, INFORMAL AND PROFOUND EXCHANGES OF VIEWS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF SUCH DIFFERENT STATES AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS SHOWED THAT INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HAVE MOVED TO AN ABSOLUTELY NEW ERA'. 'ANY UPHEAVALS OR AGGRAVATIONS WHICH MIGHT ARISE IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WILL RECEDE BEFORE THE OVERRIDING SIGNIFICANCE OF SUCH DIALOGUE'.

3. THE REPORT THEN DESCRIBED GORBACHEV'S COMMENTS TO THE PRIME MINISTER ON THE STATE OF HIS PROGRAMME OF REFORM, DURING WHICH HE STRESSED THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS. OTHER TOPICS OF CONVERSATION BRIEFLY REFERRED TO IN THE REPORT INCLUDED EAST-WEST RELATIONS, DISARMAMENT AND 'THE ALL-EUROPEAN PROCESS'.

4. IZVESTIYA OF 24 SEPTEMBER ALSO INCLUDED A REPORT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S CONFERENCE AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS PRESS CENTRE. IT REPORTED VERBATIM FROM THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPLIES TO QUESTIONS ON DISARMAMENT, (THE FINANCIAL TIMES AND NOVOSTI) NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, THE PROCESS OF REFORM IN THE SOVIET UNION, (THE GUARDIAN) THE POSSIBILITY OF A MARSHALL PLAN FOR THE SOVIET UNION, AND BRITISH-SOVIET RELATIONS. IN HER REPLY TO THE LAST QUESTION, THE PRIME MINISTER WAS REPORTED AS SAYING THAT THE QUESTION OF DIPLOMATIC EXPULSIONS HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED.

TELEVISION COVERAGE

5. THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT LED THE MAIN EVENING NEWS PROGRAMME ON SATURDAY NIGHT. THE FIRST FIFTEEN MINUTES WAS DEVOTED TO THE STORY. THE COVERAGE INCLUDED HER ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FROM VNUKOVO AIRPORT, HER WELCOME BY GORBACHEV, A MINUTE OR TWO OF HER PRESS CONFERENCE AND HER INTERVIEW FOR SOVIET TV IN FULL.

COMMENT

6. ALTHOUGH THE PRIME MINISTER WAS IN MOSCOW ONLY A FEW HOURS, THE SOVIET MEDIA TREATED HER WORKING MEETING AS THOUGH IT WAS A FULL OFFICIAL VISIT. THE COVERAGE WAS DESIGNED TO SHOW THAT THE BUSINESS-LIKE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS REMAINED UNIMPAIRED AND THAT THE PRIME MINISTER STILL GIVES WHOLE-HEARTED BACKING TO GORBACHEV PERSONALLY AND TO PERESTROIKA.

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