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US POLICY ON EAST/WEST AND EASTERN EUROPE

SUMMARY

1. THE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTITUDES SUMMARISED BY GATES (DEPUTY NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER) WHOM WESTON SAW DURING HIS VISIT LAST WEEK. THE EMPHASIS WAS STILL ON STANDING BACK FROM EVENTS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, ALBEIT POSITIVELY. BUT THERE WAS A GROWING SENSE (WHICH WILL HAVE STRENGTHENED WITH RECENT EVENTS) THAT A MORE ACTIVE POLICY IS CALLED FOR.

DETAIL

2. WESTON SAW GATES ON 9 NOVEMBER AT THE END OF A TWO DAY VISIT. GATES' REMARKS WERE BROADLY IN LINE WITH THOSE MADE IN STATE DEPARTMENT DURING WESTON'S CALLS.

US/SOVIET RELATIONS

3. COMMENTING ON THE RECENT PRESS REPORTS OF CABINET DIVISIONS OVER THE HANDLING OF RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, GATES REITERATED THE FAMILIAR THEME THAT DIFFERENCES HAD BEEN EXAGGERATED. THERE WERE NO DISAGREEMENTS ON POLICY, ONLY DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES ACCORDING TO PROFESSIONAL ROLES: CHENEY HAD TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF CONTINUING MILITARY CAPABILITIES, GATES HIMSELF APPROACHED THE QUESTION AS AN HISTORIAN AS WELL AS AN INTELLIGENCE EXPERT, WHILE BAKER HAD TO MAKE POLICY AND SEEK OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT. THE VIEWS WERE COMPLEMENTARY RATHER THAN CONTRADICTORY AND WERE INTEGRATED FOR AND BY THE PRESIDENT. THERE WAS A COMMUNITY OF SCEPTICS: NO ONE HAD ANY ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE LONG TERM PROSPECTS FOR PERESTROIKA. BUT THE PROCESS UNDERWAY OFFERED PROSPECTS FOR FURTHERING US INTERESTS, IN ARMS CONTROL, MANAGEMENT OF GLOBAL INSTABILITIES, EASTERN EUROPE AND HUMAN RIGHTS WITHIN THE SOVIET UNION. POLICY WAS NOT BASED ON GORBACHEV PERSONALLY, BUT ON THE PROCESS OF REFORM AS A WHOLE,

WHILE INSURING AGAINST EVERY POSSIBILITY THAT IT COULD GO WRONG. THE PRESS HAD MADE TOO MUCH OF THE FACT THAT BAKER HAD PREVENTED GATES FROM DELIVERING A SPEECH, SINCE IT HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT. BUT THE TEXT HAD BEEN GLOOMY ABOUT THE PROGNOSIS FOR INTERNAL SOVIET DEVELOPMENT.

EASTERN EUROPE

4. GATES SAID THAT IT WAS HARD TO SEE HOW THE US COULD USEFULLY INTERCEDE OVER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GDR, APART FROM EXPRESSING HOPE THAT EVENTS WOULD CONTINUE TO UNFOLD PEACEFULLY. THEY WERE IN ANY CASE MOVING TOO FAST FOR USEFUL ACTION TO BE FORMULATED. HE HAD AT FIRST BEEN STRUCK BY THE POLITICAL SOPHISTICATION SHOWN BY THE POLES AND HUNGARIANS IN MANAGING SUCH EXTRAORDINARY CHANGE. NOW THE EAST GERMANS WERE BEHAVING SIMILARLY. IT SEEMED THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD PLACED ONLY TWO THINGS OFF LIMITS - LEAVING THE WARSAW PACT AND ANTI-SOVIETISM - WITH A THIRD, CONTINUING MEMBERSHIP OF THE CMEA, A DESIDERATA. OTHERWISE GORBACHEV HAD ALLOWED FREE REIN. THE GOVERNMENTS AND PEOPLES IN EASTERN EUROPE HAD RESPONDED BY SHOWING IMMENSE SELF-DISCIPLINE AND HAD SUCCEEDED IN AVOIDING PROVOCATIVE ACTION DIRECTED AT MOSCOW, DESPITE MASSIVE DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE STREETS. THE WEST MIGHT DO WELL TO EXERCISE SIMILAR RESTRAINT. IT WAS NO TIME FOR GLOATING, HECTORING OR EUPHORIA.

5. GATES HAD NOT EXPECTED GORBACHEV TO PERMIT THE GDR TO GO AS FAR AS HE HAD. PRESUMABLY HE JUDGED THAT THE ALTERNATIVE WOULD HAVE BEEN AN EXPLOSION. BUT IT MEANT THAT IT WAS NO LONGER POSSIBLE TO BE CONFIDENT THAT THE GDR WOULD SURVIVE. ITS FUTURE WAS UNPREDICTABLE - KRENZ HAD TO GET AHEAD OF THE WAVE AND CONTROL IT, BUT HAD FAILED TO DO ENOUGH SO FAR. PERHAPS HIS ONLY OPTION WAS TO TEAR DOWN THE WALL.

RELATIONS WITH THE FRG

6. WESTON SUGGESTED THAT IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES IT WAS NECESSARY TO DO MORE TO CONCERT VIEWS AMONG OURSELVES AND IN PARTICULAR WITH THE FRG. IN ADDITION TO THE IMMEDIATE AND OBVIOUS ISSUES, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO PLAN THE FUTURE OF NATO OR THE EC WITHOUT FIRST ADDRESSING THE GERMAN QUESTION. GATES SAID THAT THE FRG HAD BEEN NOTICEABLY RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS THESE ISSUES IN MORE THAN THE MOST GENERALISED TERMS. BUT THE MORE DRAMATIC THE EVENTS IN THE GDR, THE MORE WILLING BONN WAS LIKELY TO BE TO TALK TO US, IF ONLY FOR REASSURANCE AND SUPPORT. THE US ITSELF HAD A GREAT DEAL OF CATCHING UP TO DO, INCLUDING ON SUBJECTS SUCH AS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN BERLIN.

SOVIET INTERNAL

7. GATES SAID THAT HE AND SCOWCROFT REGARDED THE RISK OF DISORDERLY FRAGMENTATION OF THE SOVIET UNION AS THE GREATEST CURRENT THREAT TO STABILITY. IT WSS NOT POSSIBLE FOR THE US TO ADVANCE A POLICY WHICH OPENLY ESPOUSED THE CONTINUING UNITY OF THE USSR, PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE BALTIC STATES. BUT PEACEFUL EVOLUTION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF VOLUNTARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSOCIATION OR DISASSOCIATION WAS THE ONLY WAY FORWARD. IT WOULD BE WRONG TO EXPECT RADICAL STATEMENTS FROM THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION IN THIS CONTEXT: TOO MUCH WAS AT RISK FOR THE POPULATIONS CONCERNED. HE AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR CLOSE ALLIES TO DO SOME COLLECTIVE THINKING ON POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS AND HOW BEST TO MANAGE THEM.

BUSH/GORBACHEV MEETING

8. GATES SAW TWO MAIN OBJECTIVES:

(A) A CANDID EXCHANGE ON EASTERN EUROPE, CHANGES IN THE SOVIET UNION AND GLOBAL ISSUES, BUT MORE TO GAIN A BETTER MEASURE OF EACH OTHER THAN TO ADVANCE POLICY,

(B) IMPARTING MOMENTUM TO ARMS CONTROL AND EAST-WEST RELATIONS. THERE WAS, HOWEVER A STRONGLY HELD VIEW THAT THERE WOULD BE NO DETAILED NEGOTIATING. ALMOST ALL OF THE RELEVANT EXPERTS WOULD BE LEFT IN WASHINGTON. THE PRESIDENT HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WOULD NOT ALLOW ARMS CONTROL TO BECOME THE FOCAL POINT.

PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH THE PM

9. GATES SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE LOOKING FORWARD TO A DETAILED DISCUSSION ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE. THIS WOULD COVER THE EAST (WHERE HE MUCH VALUED THE PRIME MINISTER'S VIEWS AND BRITISH EXPERIENCE) AS WELL AS ON HOW BEST TO HANDLE RELATIONS WITH THE FRG IN THAT CONTEXT.

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