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PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION: GORBACHEV'S INVOLVEMENT.

1. THE MFA HAVE JUST PASSED US A MESSAGE FROM GORBACHEV'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISER, CHERNYAYEV, TO THE EFFECT THAT GORBACHEV WOULD NOT NOW BE ABLE TO ACCOMPANY THE PRIME MINISTER TO KIEV ON SATURDAY 9 JUNE. CHERNYAYEV EXPRESSED GORBACHEV'S SINCERE REGRETS. HE SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD HAVE TO SPEND 9 JUNE DEALING WITH INTERNAL MATTERS, INCLUDING THE MAJOR STATEMENT WHICH HE IS DUE TO DELIVER TO THE USSR SUPREME SOVIET ON 11 JUNE. PRESIDENT GORBACHEV HOPED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD UNDERSTAND HIS REASONS FOR HAVING TO MAKE THIS LATE CHANGE OF PLAN.

2. WE REPLIED THAT, WHILE THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD OF COURSE BE SAD THAT THE PRESIDENT COULD NOT VISIT THE BRITISH EVENTS IN KIEV WITH HER, SHE WOULD CERTAINLY UNDERSTAND. WE WERE WELL AWARE OF THE INTENSE PRESSURE OF DOMESTIC BUSINESS.

2. WE POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS WIDELY KNOWN THAT GORBACHEV HAD INTENDED TO GO TO KIEV (IT WAS INDEED ANNOUNCED BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF THE UKRAINE AT THE OPENING OF THE BRITISH EXHIBITION IN KIEV ON 4 JUNE), THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO FIND A WAY OF LETTING THE PRESS KNOW OF THE CHANGE, AND THAT THIS WOULD INEVITABLY LEAD RECEIVE HEADLINE TREATMENT IN THE WEST AND LEAD TO SPECULATION. KRASNOV ACKNOWLEDGED THE INEVITABILITY OF THIS. HE HAD NO INFORMATION ON WHEN AND HOW THE SOVIET SIDE MIGHT RELEASE THE NEWS. WE SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE BEST FOR THE NEWS TO COME OUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IF THE CHANGE OF PLAN ONLY BECAME APPARENT AFTER THE PRIME MINISTER'S ARRIVAL, SPECULATION ABOUT IT COULD OVER-SHADOW THE POSITIVE NEWS OF THE VISIT.

COMMENT

3. WE SEE NO REASON TO SEE MORE IN THIS THAN MEETS THE EYE. THE SUPREME SOVIET SESSION HAS BEEN EXTENDED YET AGAIN, AND IS NOT NOW DUE TO END UNTIL 14 JUNE. GORBACHEV WAS TO HAVE MADE A REPORT TO THE SUPREME SOVIET TODAY (INTER ALIA COVERING HIS WASHINGTON SUMMIT MEETING): BUT THE REPORT WAS DEFERRED, OVERTLY BECAUSE OF THE MEETING IN MOSCOW OF THE WARSAW PACT CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL. ON 5 JUNE

THE SUPREME SOVIET ALSO PUT OFF UNTIL NEXT WEEK THE VOTE ON THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC REFORM PACKAGE. IN ANNOUNCING THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE VOTE, LUKYANOV INDICATED THAT THE SUPREME SOVIET MIGHT WISH TO HEAR GORBACHEV'S VIEW BEFORE TAKING ITS DECISION. LAST, BUT BY NO MEANS LEAST, GORBACHEV MUST RAPIDLY DEVISE HIS STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH YELTSIN (ON WHICH, SEE MOSCOW TELNO 1057).

4. ALTHOUGH THE PARTY SECRETARY FOR THE UKRAINE, IVASHKO, HAS JUST BEEN ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE UKRAINIAN SUPREME SOVIET (HOLDING THE LINE FOR GORBACHEV THERE FOR THE TIME BEING) NERVOUSNESS ABOUT UKRAINIAN NATIONALISM MAY HAVE PLAYED A PART IN GORBACHEV'S DECISION. HE MAY HAVE FEARED EMBARRASSMENT IF NATIONALISTS TRIED TO DEMONSTRATE AGAINST HIM IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRESENCE.

5. YOU WILL WISH TO TAKE IMMEDIATE DECISIONS ON NEWS MANAGEMENT. IT IS NOT FOR THE BRITISH SIDE TO MAKE A FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT GORBACHEV'S PLANS - BUT THE NO 10 PRESS OFFICER MAY WISH TO LET IT BE KNOWN TODAY THAT PRESSURE OF BUSINESS FOLLOWING GORBACHEV'S LONG ABSENCE IN NORTH AMERICA, INCLUDING HIS SCHEDULED STATEMENT TO THE SUPREME SOVIET ON MONDAY, WILL PREVENT THE PRESIDENT FROM ACCOMPANYING THE PRIME MINISTER TO KIEV. IT COULD BE ADDED THAT THE CENTRAL WORKING ELEMENT OF THIS VISIT HAS ALWAYS BEEN SEEN AS THE OFFICIAL TALKS IN MOSCOW ON FRIDAY 8 JUNE: AND THAT IT HAD NEVER BEEN ENTIRELY CERTAIN THAT PRESIDENT GORBACHEV WOULD BE ABLE TO SPARE THE TIME TO VISIT THE BRITISH EXHIBITION IN KIEV. THE PRESS COULD BE TOLD THAT THE PRIME MINISTER FULLY UNDERSTANDS AND SYMPATHISES WITH PRESIDENT GORBACHEV'S DECISION: AND THAT SHE WILL BE GIVING A JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE WITH HIM IN MOSCOW ON THE AFTERNOON OF 8 JUNE (THE MFA AGAIN CONFIRMED THIS ITEM TO US TODAY). WE WOULD TAKE A SIMILAR LINE IN RESPONSE TO ENQUIRIES TO THE EMBASSY.

6. WE INDICATED TO THE MFA THAT YOU WERE LIKELY TO ACT IN THIS WAY, AND SAID THAT THEY SHOULD LET US KNOW AT ONCE IF THEY HAD ANY FURTHER SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE ABOUT THE NEWS MANAGEMENT. THEY HAVE MADE NONE, AND IN GENERAL AGREED WITH THIS RECOMMENDATION. THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT WOULD BE BEYOND OUR POWERS TO LIMIT COMMENT OR SPECULATION.

7. NOTWITHSTANDING THE MFA'S AGREEMENT, WE SHALL TRY TO CROSS-CHECK THAT GORBACHEV'S OFFICE ARE CONTENT WITH OUR PROPOSED LINE AND PREPARED TO ACT IN PARALLEL. IN THE MEANTIME, GRATEFUL IF YOU COULD LET US KNOW BY TELEGRAM OR SATELLITE TELEPHONE HOW YOU WISH TO HANDLE THIS.

8. PSE ADVANCE TO NO 10 DOWNING ST.

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