

GRS 730

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TO PRIORITY FCO

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INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW, WASHINGTON, PARIS

INFO SAVING ANKARA, ATHENS, BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN, THE HAGUE, LISBON,  
LUXEMBOURG, OSLO, OTTAWA, REYKJAVIK, UKDEL NATO, BMG BERLIN, ROME

CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S VISIT TO MOSCOW

1. CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT LEFT THIS MORNING FOR HIS TWO-DAY VISIT TO MOSCOW, ACCOMPANIED BY GENSCHER. THERE IS EXTENSIVE PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT THE LIKELY OUTCOME, MUCH OF IT REFLECTING OFFICIAL BRIEFING. THE OVERALL IMPRESSION IS UNCERTAIN AND CONFUSED. THIS REFLECTS THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ON THE ONE HAND THE GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO AVOID RAISING UNREALISTIC HOPES AND TO STRESS THE FIRMNESS WITH WHICH SCHMIDT WILL PRESENT THE ALLIANCE POSITION AND ON THE OTHER, THE CHANCELLOR'S NEED TO BE SEEN TO PRODUCE A SUCCESS IN MOSCOW WHICH WILL GIVE FURTHER MOMENTUM TO THE COALITION'S ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND SATISFY THE SPD'S DESIRE FOR PROGRESS ON ARMS CONTROL.
  2. THE GENERAL ANZEIGER, REFLECTING BRIEFING BY THE AUSWAERTIGES AMT, IDENTIFIES THREE MAIN OBJECTIVES WHICH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BELIEVES MIGHT REALISTICALLY BE OBTAINABLE ON AN OPTIMISTIC SCENARIO:
    - (A) AGREEMENT BY THE RUSSIANS TO ENTER INTO DISCUSSION WITH THE THREE-MAN COMMISSION SET UP BY THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE WITH A VIEW TO REACHING A POLITICAL SOLUTION IN AFGHANISTAN, AND PERHAPS ALSO WITH A VIEW TO ESTABLISHING A TIMETABLE FOR SOVIET WITHDRAWAL:
    - (B) SOVIET AGREEMENT TO START PRELIMINARY TALKS WITH THE US, WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS, ABOUT THE PROCEDURE FOR, AND CONTENT OF, NEGOTIATIONS FOR A FURTHER LIMITATION OF NUCLEAR ARMS PARTICULARLY MEDIUM-RANGE MISSILES:
    - (C) A DECLARATION BY THE SOVIET UNION OF THE NEED TO END THE HOSTAGE AFFAIR IN IRAN, PLUS CONFIRMATION OF EARLIER STATEMENTS THAT THE SOVIET UNION RESPECTS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GULF REGION FOR WORLD ENERGY SUPPLY.
- THE CHANCELLOR IS ALSO EXPECTED TO PRESS FOR FURTHER PROGRESS ON FAMILY REUNIFICATION: AND THE LONG-TERM ECONOMIC PROGRAMME AGREED DURING TICHONOV'S RECENT VISIT TO BONN IS EXPECTED TO BE SIGNED DURING THE VISIT, ALTHOUGH NOT (IF THE GERMANS HAVE THEIR WAY) BY THE CHANCELLOR HIMSELF.
3. IF ANY OR ALL OF THESE THREE OBJECTIVES WERE ACHIEVED, THE CHANCELLOR WOULD BE ABLE TO PRESENT THE VISIT TO HIS OWN PUBLIC OPINION AS A MAJOR SUCCESS. BUT THE CATCH OF COURSE LIES IN THE PRICE WHICH THE SOVIET SIDE MAY SEEK TO EXACT. AFTER THE MUCH PUBLICISED RESTORATION OF ALLIANCE SOLIDARITY AT VENICE AND ANKARA, THERE CAN HARDLY BE ANY QUESTION OF THE GERMANS DEROGATING

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IN MOSCOW FROM NATO'S DECEMBER DECISIONS IN ORDER TO STRIKE SOME KIND OF BARGAIN WITH THE RUSSIANS. BUT, AS SOME PRESS COMMENT (NOTABLY IN A WELL-INFORMED PIECE IN SPIEGEL ON THE VENICE SUMMIT) POINTS OUT, THE RUSSIANS COULD PUT THE CHANCELLOR NEATLY INTO A DILEMMA IF THEY WERE IN EFFECT TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL WHICH HE HAS STRONGLY DENIED MAKING FOR A MUTUAL EAST/WEST MORATORIUM ON THE FURTHER DEPLOYMENT OF THEATRE NUCLEAR WEAPONS. AND THE FURTHER THE SOVIET UNION MIGHT BE PREPARED TO GO TOWARDS AGREEING TO NEGOTIATE THEATRE NUCLEAR WEAPONS WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS, THE STRONGER THE DOMESTIC PRESSURE IN THE FRG WOULD BE TO TAKE THEM AT THEIR WORD, ESPECIALLY WITHIN THE SPD. SPD AND CDU SPOKESMEN ARE ALREADY STAKING OUT THEIR POSITIONS IN THIS REGARD: BAHR IS QUOTED TODAY AS SAYING THAT ARMS CONTROL WILL BE THE CRUCIAL QUESTION IN MOSCOW. DREGGER, ON THE OTHER HAND, AS POINTING OUT THAT SOVIET ACCEPTANCE OF A MORATORIUM ON DEPLOYMENT OF TNF WOULD BE MEANINGLESS WITHOUT A MORATORIUM ON PRODUCTION.

4. IN SHORT, THE RISK FOR SCHMIDT SEEMS TO BE THAT, IF HE RETURNS WITH COMPLETELY EMPTY HANDS, HE WILL BE FIERCELY CRITICISED FOR HAVING MADE THE VISIT TO NO PURPOSE. BUT IT WILL NOT BE DIFFICULT FOR THE RUSSIANS TO COME UP WITH AN OFFER (EITHER ON ARMS CONTROL OR EVEN ON AFGHANISTAN) TOO ATTRACTIVE FOR THE GERMANS TO REJECT OUT OF HAND BUT TOO COSMETIC TO APPEAL TO THE AMERICANS. THE RIFT IN THE ALLIANCE WHICH HAS BEEN AT BEST PRECARIOUSLY PAPERED OVER AT VENICE AND ANKARA WOULD THEN BE SHARPLY REOPENED, AND A DEBATE TRIGGERED OFF INSIDE THE FRG ON THE GROUND ON WHICH THE SPD IS PERHAPS MOST VULNERABLE TO OPPOSITION ATTACK.

5. IN SHORT, WHAT STARTED OUT, ON THE GERMAN SIDE, AS AN EXERCISE WITH THE DOMESTIC ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER IN VIEW, AN EXERCISE WHICH THE RUSSIANS WERE READY TO ABET, AT A PRICE, SINCE THEY WOULD PREFER TO HAVE SCHMIDT TO DEAL WITH THAN STRAUSS, HAS BEEN CAUGHT UP IN SUPER POWER RIVALRY FOR THE SOUL OF GERMANY. NO WONDER GENSCHER, WHEN I OFFERED HIM ON SATURDAY MY BEST WISHES FOR HIS TRIP TO MOSCOW, REPLIED THAT HE NEEDED ALL THE GOOD WISHES HE COULD GET.

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