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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

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USSR/GDR

SUMMARY

1. DHM CALLED ON HEAD OF MFA DEPARTMENT DEALING WITH THE FRG.
CONVERSATION CENTRED ON EVENTS IN THE GDR, AND SOVIET CONCERNS OVER
REUNIFICATION.

DETAIL

2. BONDARENKO, HEAD OF THE THIRD EUROPEAN DEPARTMENT (WHICH DEALS
WITH THE GERMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRIES OF WESTERN EUROPE) DEVOTED THE
WHOLE OF AN INTRODUCTORY CALL BY LOGAN TO DISCUSSION OF EVENTS IN THE
GDR AND THEIR WIDER IMPLICATIONS. HE SPOKE AT LENGTH ON SOVIET
CONCERNS OVER CALLS FOR REUNIFICATION. PREVIOUSLY THESE HAD SURFACED
FROM TIME TO TIME IN POLITICAL DEBATES, BUT HAD NOT REALLY BEEN
CONSIDERED PRACTICAL. NOW THERE WAS A DIFFERENT FEELING IN THE AIR.
IN HIS SPEECH IN HAMBURG KOHL HAD NOT TREATED THE QUESTION AS
ENTIRELY HYPOTHETICAL, AND MANY WEST GERMAN POLITICIANS HAD SPOKEN OF
THE NEED TO MOVE RAPIDLY TO REUNIFICATION.

3. THE USSR WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE LLEGAL POSITION
TAKEN BY THE FRG. IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES THE FRG HAD SIGNED
AGREEMENTS WITH THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES OF EUROPE, WHICH INCLUDED THE
ACCEPTANCE OF THE EXISTING BOUNDARIES AS INVIOABLE. A JUDGEMENT OF
THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL COURT IN 1973 REJECTED THESE AGREEMENTS BY
DECLARING THAT ANY DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FRG WERE
OF A TEMPORARY NATURE, AND WOULD NOT BE BINDING ON A SINGLE REUNIFIED
GERMANY. ACCORDING TO THE LOGIC OF THIS JUDGEMENT, A REUNIFIED
GERMANY WOULD NO LONGER BE BOUND BY, FOR EXAMPLE, THE QUADRIPARTITE
AGREEMENTS OR THE PARIS TREATY.

5. LOGAN SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD MADE CLEAR TO ZAMYATIN
WHEN HE DELIVERED GORBACHEV'S MESSAGE ON 10 NOVEMBER HER VIEW THAT
CHANCELLOR KOHL'S APPROACH WAS BOTH CAUTIOUS AND RESPONSIBLE. SHE
HERSELF HAD EMPHASISED, IN HER PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON 10 NOVEMBER, THAT
IT WAS IN EVERYONE'S INTERESTS THAT THE SITUATION SHOULD DEVELOP IN A
CONTROLLED MANNER AND NOT HAVE A DESTABILISING EFFECT ON EUROPE. THE
RUSSIANS SHOULD REMEMBER THAT IN WESTERN DEMOCRACIES POLITICAL
LEADERS HAD TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONCERNS. IT WAS

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IMPOSSIBLE FOR FRG LEADERS SIMPLY TO IGNORE THE ISSUE OF REUNIFICATION. EQUALLY, HOWEVER, WE WERE CONFIDENT THAT WESTERN LEADERS, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE FRG UNDERSTOOD SOVIET SENSITIVITIES. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE INTERESTED POWERS SHOULD KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH AS THE SITUATION DEVELOPED.

6. BONDARENKO AGREED THAT CONTACT WAS IMPORTANT: THE RUSSIANS WOULD BE READY TO MEET THEIR BRITISH COUNTERPARTS AT ANY TIME. HE THOUGHT THAT THE EAST GERMANS SHOULD BE LEFT ALONE TO WORK OUT A REFORM PROGRAMME. THEY HAD TO BE GIVEN TIME. ANY MAJOR REFORM POLICY HAD AN ELEMENT OF RISK BUT THE GDR HAD GREAT POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT. IT HAD A GOOD ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL BASE AND A DISCIPLINED POPULATION. THE EUROPEAN PROCESS, WHICH HAD BEEN MOVED ALONG BY REFORMS IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THE USSR AND BY ARMS REDUCTIONS, SHOULD NOT BE THROWN INTO JEOPARDY BECAUSE OF EVENTS IN GERMANY.

6. LOGAN SAID THAT IN THE UK'S VIEW THE OBJECTIVE OF AN ORDERLY EVOLUTION IN THE GDR WOULD BEST BE ACHIEVED BY POLITICAL REFORM WHICH PROPERLY REFLECTED THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE EAST GERMANS. WE FULLY SUBSCRIBED TO THE STATED RUSSIAN VIEW THAT THIS WAS A MATTER FOR THE PEOPLE OF EAST GERMANY TO DETERMINE. BUT THIS ENTAILED THAT SOVIET POLICY-MAKERS SHOULD TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE POSSIBILITY OF FREEDOM WHICH RISKED THE NULLIFICATION OF THE THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE EAST GERMAN STATE. SIMILARLY SOVIET SPOKESMEN SPOKE OF THE DISSOLUTION OF BLOCs AS A LONGTERM AIM, BUT FAILED TO GIVE REALISTIC SIGNPOSTS INDICATING HOW TO REACH THIS LONG-TERM GOAL. IT WAS ABSENCE OF POLICIES WHICH OFFERED ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS WHICH WAS PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SITUATION ABOUT WHICH BONDARENKO WAS NOW EXPRESSING CONCERN.

7. BONDARENKO REPLIED THAT THE OFFER OF REUNIFICATION HAD BEEN MADE BY THE EAST EARLY IN THE COLD WAR PERIOD BUT HAD BEEN REFUSED BY THE FRG. THIS, HE CLAIMED, DEMONSTRATED THAT THE GDR DID NOT EXIST SIMPLY BY VIRTUE OF ITS COMMUNIST SYSTEM. AS FOR THE MEANS BY WHICH THE DISSOLUTION OF THE BLOCs WOULD BE ACHIEVED, THE KEY LAY IN THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE CFE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WOULD LEAD TO A RADICAL REDUCTION IN THE LEVELS OF ARMAMENTS ON BOTH SIDES. LOGAN REPLIED THAT BONDARENKO WOULD NOT EXPECT HIM TO ACCEPT BONDARENKO'S INTERPRETATION OF THE POST-WAR POSITION: AND THE FACT WAS THAT IT WAS THE RUSSIANS THEMSELVES WHO WERE NOW EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT TALK OF REUNIFICATION. NOR DID WE BELIEVE THAT A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE CFE NEGOTIATIONS, IMPORTANT THOUGH THOSE WERE, REPRESENTED A POLICY FOR THE EVOLUTION OF EUROPEAN RELATIONS. IN THE END, ARMS CONTROL DEPENDED UPON A RESOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL DIFFERENCES RATHER THAN VICE VERSA.

COMMENT

8. BONDARENKO REPRESENTS THE CONSERVATIVE END OF THE SPECTRUM IN SOVIET OFFICIAL OPINION AND HIS REMARKS SHOULD BE SEEN IN THAT LIGHT. NONETHELESS, HIS ANXIETY ABOUT FRG INTENTIONS IS PROBABLY WIDELY SHARED. IT DEMONSTRATES THE IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING ROOM FOR RUSSIAN MISUNDERSTANDING OF WESTERN INTENTIONS

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