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OF 161335Z NOVEMBER 89

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A. file

GDR AND EUROPEAN STABILITY: SOVIET COMMENT: 15/16 NOVEMBER

SUMMARY

1. IN OFF THE CUFF REMARKS, GORBACHEV AGAIN DECLARES THAT REUNIFICATION IS NOT ON THE AGENDA.

DETAIL

2. AT A STUDENT FORUM ON 15 NOVEMBER GORBACHEV REPLIED TO QUESTIONS ON THE GDR. (HIS MAIN SPEECH TO THE FORUM WAS PRINTED IN FULL IN PRAVDA AND REPORTED ON THE EVENING TV NEWS, BUT HIS REMARKS ON THE GDR WERE REPORTED ONLY BY TASS.)

3. GORBACHEV WELCOMED WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC. TRANSFORMATIONS THERE WERE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROCESSES OF RENEWAL TAKING PLACE IN ALL SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. 'THE EXISTENCE OF THE TWO GERMAN STATES IS A RESULT OF HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT, OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR. THIS FACT HAS BEEN RECOGNISED BY THE WORLD COMMUNITY, AND ONE SHOULD PROCEED FROM THIS REALITY. THE QUESTION OF THE REUNIFICATION OF THESE TWO STATES IS NOT A MATTER OF TOPICAL POLITICS. TALKING ABOUT REUNIFICATION WOULD MEAN INTERFERENCE IN THE AFFAIRS OF WEST GERMANY AND THE GDR.' (TASS TRANSLATION).

4. THE SOVIET UNION HAD PROPOSED BUILDING A NEW WORLD ORDER IN THE FRAMEWORK OF NEW POLITICAL THINKING. THE PREVIOUS STAGE, THE COLD WAR, HAS ILLUSTRATED THAT BANKING ON THE ARMS RACE AND CONFRONTATION WAS UNTENABLE. CERTAIN FORCES IN THE WEST WERE TRYING TO CREATE AN IMPRESSION THAT PROFOUND CHANGES IN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES SIGNIFIED THE FAILURE OF SOCIALIST IDEAS. THIS WAS WISHFUL THINKING: 'WE ARE REFORMING SOCIETY, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT NEW REALITIES. WE ARE EXPANDING THE POTENTIAL OF THE SOCIALIST SOCIAL SYSTEM. WE SHALL BE ADVANCING ON THE CHOSEN ROAD, AND WE SHALL CONTINUE TO ADHERE TO SOCIALIST IDEAS.'

OTHER PRESS COVERAGE

5. COVERAGE OF THE GDR IN THE CENTRAL PRESS HAS REMAINED BRIEF AND LARGELY FACTUAL. IN PRAVDA ON 16 NOVEMBER, COMMENTATOR GEORGY VASILEEV ASSESSED THE US ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSE TO EVENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE AND QUOTED APPROVINGLY BAKER'S RECENT REMARKS (ON ABC NIGHTLINE) ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING STABILITY IN EUROPE AND OF PURSUING A PEACEFUL PATH TO REFORM. 'THE USA, IF ONE CAN JUDGE FROM PAST ANNOUNCEMENTS BY A RANGE OF THE LEADERS OF THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION, IS IN FAVOUR OF THE PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROCESSES OF RENEWAL IN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. THEY REALISE THAT THE PRESERVATION OF STABILITY IN EUROPE IS IN THE INTERESTS OF ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION AND OF THE WORLD'.

6. THIS WEEKS MOSCOW NEWS PUBLISHED AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR JENS REICH OF NEW FORUM. REICH DESCRIBED THE ORIGINAL AIMS OF NEW FORUM AS OVERCOMING PEOPLE'S FEAR AND APATHY AND TRYING TO FIND REAL SOLUTIONS TO THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS. 'WE HAVE FOLLOWED PERESTROIKA IN THE USSR WITH OUR HEARTS IN OUR MOUTHS'. ON REUNIFICATION THEY STARTED 'FROM THE EXISTENCE OF ONE GERMAN NATION BUT OF TWO GERMAN STATES'. THEY WERE NOW CONCERNED TO END THE FEELING OF ALIENATION IN THE GDR. REICH COMMENTED THAT 'SOCIALISM IN THE GDR HAS NO ALTERNATIVE. PEOPLE BELIEVE IN IT'. NEW FORUM INTENDED TO REMAIN AS AN INFORMAL MOVEMENT IN THE FUTURE, RATHER THAN A PARTY.

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