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GERMANY AND NATO: VIEWS OF SHAKHNAZAROV

SUMMARY

1. A CLOSE GORBACHEV AIDE REPEATS THE CALL FOR WESTERN FLEXIBILITY. HE SUPPORTS THE IDEA OF GERMAN FORCES OUTSIDE NATO'S MILITARY STRUCTURE. FEARS OF RESURGENT NATIONALISM. ARGUMENT THAT GERMANY IN NATO WOULD MAKE THE SOVIET PEOPLE THINK THAT PERESTROIKA HAD LOST THE FRUITS OF VICTORY. WARSAW PACT TO MEET ON 7 JUNE.

DETAIL

2. WHEN I CALLED ON GEORGY SHAKHNAZAROV (ONE OF GORBACHEVS AIDES) ON 31 MAY HE BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT OF GERMANY AND NATO. SHAKHNAZAROV SAID THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE WAITING TO HEAR SOME NEW IDEAS FROM THE WEST. WESTERN STATEMENTS WERE BEGINNING TO SOUND LIKE OLD GRAMOPHONE RECORDS. HE COULD NOT SEE WHY THE WEST HAD PROBLEMS WITH THE IDEA OF A UNITED GERMANY IN WHICH THE BUNDESWEHR WOULD STAY OUTSIDE NATO'S MILITARY STRUCTURES. THE WARSAW PACT HAD COLLAPSED: IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SEE WHAT PURPOSE NATO STILL SERVED. THE USSR WOULD BE ONLY TOO HAPPY TO JOIN NATO IF THEY WERE INVITED. THE WEST WAS STILL SUFFERING FROM ELEMENTS OF OLD-THINKING: THEY HAD TO RID THEMSELVES OF THE IDEA OF THE 'SOVIET THREAT'. THEY SHOULD ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT, ONCE GERMANY WAS UNITED, THERE WOULD BE 3 NOT 2 SUPERPOWERS. IF A UNITED GERMANY WAS INCLUDED IN NATO, THE REST OF EUROPE WOULD BECOME ITS APPENDAGE.

3. SHAKHNAZAROV ALSO STRESSED THE CONTINUING INFLUENCE OF NATIONALISM. THE HUNGARIANS WERE ALREADY RAISING THE ISSUE OF TRANSYLVANIA: THE ROMANIANS - MOLDAVIA. IT WOULD BE NAIVE TO SUPPOSE THAT SIMILAR PRESSURES WOULD NOT DEVELOP IN GERMANY EG VIS A VIS SILESIA.

4. SHAKHNAZAROV SAID THAT IT WAS A PTY THAT THE UK WAS NOT DOING MORE TO HELP RESOLVE THESE PROBLEMS. WE WERE CLOSELY INVOLVED AND HAD A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES THAN OTHERS. IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL IF THE PRIME MINISTER COULD COME TO MOSCOW WITH SOME NEW IDEAS. THE RUSSIANS NEEDED SOME NEW MOVE FROM THE WEST. THIS WAS PARTLY A PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUE. AS LONG AS NATO REMAINED IN EXISTENCE, EUROPE REMAINED DIVIDED. A UNITED GERMANY WITHIN NATO WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR SOVIET PUBLIC OPINION TO ACCEPT. IT WOULD LOOK AS IF PERESTROIKA HAD CAUSED THEM TO LOSE THE WAR.

5. SHAKHNAZAROV ALSO CONFIRMED THAT THE WARSAW PACT POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WOULD BE MEETING IN MOSCOW ON 7 JUNE. GORBACHEV WOULD BE BRIEFING THEM ON HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON, AND THERE WOULD AGAIN BE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT POSITION IN EUROPE. GORBACHEV WOULD BE ABLE TO TELL THE PRIME MINISTER ABOUT THIS MEETING.

6. I REHEARSED ALL THE COUNTER-ARGUMENTS. HOWEVER INCONVENIENT, IT WAS A GEO-STRATEGIC FACT THAT ONE SUPERPOWER WAS GEOGRAPHICALLY IN EUROPE AND THE OTHER WAS OVER THE OCEAN. THE SOVIET UNION MIGHT WELL, BOTH NOW AND IN THE FUTURE, HAVE ABANDONED ITS EARLIER EXPANSIONIST AMBITIONS. BUT IT WAS UNREALISTIC TO THINK THAT THE WESTERN EUROPEANS WOULD WISH TO ABANDON THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS THAT THEY HAD BUILT UP OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS. OF COURSE THERE WAS SCOPE FOR NEW THINKING: A SERIES OF NATO MEETINGS WAS BEING HELD FOR THIS PURPOSE, CULMINATING IN THE SUMMIT AT THE BEGINNING OF JULY. AS FOR THE PROSPECT OF GERMANY BECOMING A THIRD SUPER POWER, IT WAS PRECISELY BECAUSE WE - AND THE GERMANS THEMSELVES - BELIEVED THAT GERMANY NEEDED TO BE INTEGRATED INTO A WIDER FRAMEWORK THAT THE WESTERN EUROPEANS HAD SET UP THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IN THE FIRST PLACE AND STILL BELEIVED THAT GERMAN FORCES INTEGRATED INTO NATO WERE A GUARANTEE OF SECURITY TO EVERYONE.

BRAITHWAITE

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