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WASHINGTON TELNO 2487 : US/SOVIET RELATIONS: PREPARATORY SUMMIT

## SUMMARY

1. EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE GENEVA SUMMIT HAVE INCREASED THE RISKS INHERENT IN A VISIT BY GORBACHEV TO THE USA. GORBACHEV'S PROPOSAL FOR A PREPARATORY SUMMIT IN REYKJAVIK PROBABLY DESIGNED TO ENABLE HIM TO ESTABLISH FOR HIMSELF THAT THE RISKS ARE WORTH TAKING.

## DETAIL

2. EVEN AT THE TIME OF THE GENEVA SUMMIT IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE VISIT TO THE US BY GORBACHEV, WHICH WAS THEN AGREED IN PRINCIPLE FOR 1986, WOULD INVOLVE A DEGREE OF RISK FOR HIM. THE INSUBSTANTIAL OUTCOME OF THE GENEVA MEETING COULD, TAKING PLACE AS IT DID ON NEUTRAL GROUND, BE REPRESENTED TO SOVIET OPINION AS A DRAW OR EVEN A SUCCESS: A SIMILAR OR ONLY SLIGHTLY MORE SIGNIFICANT OUTCOME FROM A MEETING ON AMERICAN GROUND WOULD DEFINITELY BE SEEN AS A DEFEAT. HENCE, IN PART, GORBACHEV'S CONSTANT EMPHASIS SINCE GENEVA ON THE NEED FOR A PRODUCTIVE SECOND SUMMIT. THE ERRATIC COURSE OF US/SOVIET RELATIONS THIS YEAR, CULMINATING IN ZAKHAROV/DANILOFF AND THE UN EXPULSIONS, HAS FURTHER RAISED THE STAKES. THERE MAY WELL BE THOSE IN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WHO WOULD ARGUE THAT, AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF REPEATED US SLIGHTS AND CUSSEDNESS, THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CPSU SHOULD NOT BE DRAWN INTO ALL THE RAZMATAZ AND UNPREDICTABILITY OF A VISIT TO WASHINGTON UNTIL THE AMERICANS HAVE EARNED IT BY A PERIOD OF GOOD BEHAVIOUR.

3. GORBACHEV HIMSELF NEVERTHELESS STILL WANTS TO GO (MY TELNO 1124, PARA 6). BUT IT IS NOW EVEN MORE IMPORTANT FOR HIM TO SECURE A CAST-IRON ASSURANCE THAT, IF HE DOES, HE WILL BE ABLE TO BRING BACK A SUFFICIENTLY IMPRESSIVE PACKAGE OF AGREEMENTS, FAVOURABLE TO SOVIET AS WELL AS TO US INTERESTS, TO DISARM HIS ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL CRITICS. HE SEEMS TO HAVE CONCLUDED THAT SUCH AN ASSURANCE CAN ONLY BE OBTAINED FROM DIRECT TALKS WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN: ANY PROSPECTIVE PACKAGE WHICH MIGHT EMERGE FROM EXCHANGES BETWEEN SHULTZ AND SHEVARDNADZE COULD, GORBACHEV DOUBTLESS BELIEVES (PERHAPS ON DOBRYNIN'S ADVICE) BE UNDERMINED AND UNRAVELLED BY WEINBERGER AND HIS ALLIES BEFORE BEING GIVEN FINAL PRESIDENTIAL BLESSING. GORBACHEV'S NATURAL INSTINCT IS IN ANY CASE TO SEE FOR HIMSELF IF POSSIBLE, AND TO FORM HIS OWN ASSESSMENTS.

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4. SHEVERDNADZE'S PRESS CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK ON 30 SEPTEMBER (AS PUBLISHED IN PRAVDA ON 1 OCTOBER) WAS SKILFUL IN ITS TACTICS AS WELL AS IN ITS PRESENTATION. HIS CONFIDENT REFERENCES TO GORBACHEV'S FORTHCOMING US VISIT, AS IF THIS WERE A FOREGONE CONCLUSION, SHOULD NOT IN MY VIEW BE TAKEN AT THEIR FACE VALUE. MOREOVER, HIS STATEMENT THAT "THERE IS NO PROGRESS" IN THE MAIN AREAS OF US/SOVIET RELATIONS IS NOT, JUDGING BY US BRIEFINGS ON CURRENT ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS, JUSTIFIED. THE INTENTION IS EVIDENTLY TO CREATE A SITUATION IN WHICH GORBACHEV CAN CLAIM THE CREDIT FOR A POSITIVE OUTCOME FROM REYKJAVIK BUT, EQUALLY, PLACE THE BLAME ON THE AMERICANS IF HE DOES NOT SECURE THE DEGREE OF ASSURANCE OF A PRODUCTIVE SUMMIT WHICH HE NEEDS IN ORDER TO GO AHEAD WITH HIS US TRIP. AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF SHEVARDNADZE'S DETERMINED OPTIMISM, GORBACHEV WOULD BE ABLE TO SAY THAT IT WAS US RELUCTANCE TO GO THE EXTRA MILE AT REYKJAVIK WHICH HAD OBLIGED HIM TO CONCLUDE THAT THE CONDITIONS DID NOT YET EXIST FOR A FULL-SCALE SUMMIT.

5. IT SEEMS CLEAR BOTH FROM SHEVARDNADZE'S REMARKS AND FROM THE ACCOUNT WHICH MY US COLLEAGUE (PLEASE PROTECT) HAS GIVEN ME (AND MY FRG AND FRENCH COLLEAGUES) OF THE TALKS IN WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK, THAT ONE OF THESE CONDITIONS WILL STILL HAVE TO BE THE PROSPECT OF AT LEAST MODEST PROGRESS TOWARDS A LIMITATION ON NUCLEAR TESTS. THE RUSSIANS ARE CONTINUING TO PAINT THEMSELVES INTO A CORNER ON THE NUCLEAR TEST ISSUE AND EVEN AN INTERIM INF AGREEMENT WOULD NOT COMPENSATE FOR FAILURE BY GORBACHEV TO BRING BACK FROM A SUMMIT EVEN A MODEST ADVANCE ON TESTING. ONE OF HIS MAIN OBJECTIVES AT REYKJAVIK WILL BE TO ASSESS HIS CHANCES OF SECURING THIS: IF THE US POSITION REMAINS COMPLETELY HARD I WOULD NOT ENTIRELY EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SUMMIT COULD SLIP INTO NEXT YEAR. PARTLY FOR INTERNAL POLITICAL REASONS, HOWEVER, GORBACHEV'S FIRM PREFERENCE WILL BE TO AVOID SUCH A POSTPONEMENT IF POSSIBLE: HE WILL WISH TO APPEAR AT THE NEXT CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM (WHICH COULD TAKE PLACE LATER THIS MONTH AND IS EXPECTED TO DEAL WITH INTERNAL POLICIES AND POSSIBLY LEADERSHIP CHANGES) WITH A CONSTRUCTIVE REYKJAVIK MEETING BEHIND HIM AND THE FIRM PROSPECT OF A SUCCESSFUL SUMMIT AHEAD.

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