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TO PRIORITY F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 114 OF 1 FEBRUARY

INFO ROUTINE UKDEL NATO

INFO SAVING WASHINGTON, BONN, PARIS, ALL EAST EUROPEAN POSTS
AND ULAN BATOR

THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP : ANDROPOV.

1. ANDROPOV'S EMERGING LEADERSHIP STYLE HAS TAKEN DISTINCTIVE SHAPE IN A PROMINENT REPORT CARRIED BY PRAVDA AND OTHER SOVIET NEWSPAPERS FOR 1 FEBRUARY OF HIS VISIT TO A MOSCOW FACTORY. THE REPORT LARGELY TAKES THE FORM OF APPARENTLY VERBATIM EXCHANGES BETWEEN ANDROPOV AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT AND SHOP FLOOR.

2. IT IS SIGNIFICANT ON A NUMBER OF COUNTS :

(I) IT IS THE MOST STRIKING EXAMPLE YET OF THE MORE POPULIST STYLE ADOPTED BY THE REGIME SINCE ANDROPOV'S SUCCESSION AND HAS, TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, NO PRECEDENT UNDER BREZHNEV. IT IS, FOR INSTANCE, OF A PIECE WITH THE RECENT INNOVATION OF REGULAR PUBLIC REPORTS OF POLITBURO PROCEEDINGS.

(II) THE PRESENTATION IS SKILLFULLY CALCULATED TO BOOST ANDROPOV PERSONALLY AS A PLAIN SPEAKING AND SIMPLE MAN OF THE PEOPLE (ALTHOUGH ANDROPOV IS CAREFUL TO POINT OUT THAT HE IS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE POLITBURO AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE) . THERE IS NONE OF THE POMP AND BOMBAST WHICH WOULD HAVE ATTENDED BREZHNEV, NOR OF THE EXAGGERATEDLY FOLKSY STYLE ASSOCIATED, AT ANY RATE IN THE WEST, WITH KRUSHCHEV. PRAVDA CARRIES NO PHOTOGRAPHS. ANDROPOV'S SPEECH WAS BRIEF AND TO THE POINT, COUCHED IN EVERYDAY LANGUAGE AND INTERRUPTED AT ONE POINT BY LAUGHTER IN THE HALL. HE APPEARS TO HAVE SPENT MUCH OF THE TIME LISTENING TO THE FACTORY STAFF, OCCASIONALLY PUTTING QUESTIONS AND MAKING BRIEF REMARKS, WHICH ARE PRESUMABLY INTENDED TO SHOW THAT HE HAS A GRASP OF THE EVERYDAY PROBLEMS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE, AS WELG AS OF MAJOR ECONOMIC ISSUES.

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(III) IT REINFORCES IN, FOR THE SOVIET UNION, A FRESH AND STRIKING WAY THE REGIME'S CONSTANT MESSAGE ON THE ECONOMY SINCE ANDROPOV'S SPEECH AT THE NOVEMBER 1982 PARTY PLENUM: THE NEED FOR HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY, BETTER USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES, A FAIR DAY'S WORK FOR A FAIR DAY'S PAY, AND, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS, FOR TIGHTER DISCIPLINE IN THE WORKPLACE (' ' THIS CONCERNS EVERYONE, STARTING WITH MINISTERS ' '). ANDROPOV'S SPEECH, WHICH DOES NOT MINCE WORDS ABOUT DEFECTS IN THE ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE, WARNS THAT PAY RISES WILL NOT BRING GREATER WELL-BEING IF NOT MATCHED BY HIGHER PRODUCTION AND SUGGESTS THAT WORKERS HAVE ONLY THEMSELVES TO BLAME IF POOR PRODUCTIVITY LEADS TO EMPTY SHELVES.

(IV) IT IS FURTHER CONFIRMATION THAT ON THE ECONOMY ANDROPOV SEES HIS MAIN TASK NOT AS ROOT AND BRANCH REFORM BUT AS TRYING TO MAKE THE PRESENT SYSTEM WORK BETTER.

3. F C O PLEASE PASS TO SAVING ADDRESSEES.

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