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TO PRIORITY FCO

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INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW, UKDEL NATO, MODUK

INFO ROUTINE NATO POSTS, DUBLIN UKMIS GENEVA, UKDIS GENEVA (IN NEW YORK), TOKYO, NEW DELHI, CANBERRA, UKREP BRUSSELS

GENEVA SUMMIT PROSPECTS

SUMMARY

1. NOT A PRE-SCRIPTED SET-PIECE, AND SOME STAGE-HANDS NOT ENTIRELY CONFIDENT THAT ALL WILL BE RIGHT ON THE NIGHT. BUT THE PRESIDENT'S WISH TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE RUSSIANS NOT IN DOUBT. NO MAJOR ARMS CONTROL ACHIEVEMENTS LIKELY THIS TIME ROUND: BUT THE PLAY SHOULD HAVE MORE THAN ONE ACT.

DETAIL

2. THE PRESIDENT FLIES TO GENEVA ON 16 NOVEMBER, FOR EIGHT HOURS OF (SIMULTANEOUSLY TRANSLATED) TALKS WITH GORBACHEV ON 19/20 (AND PERHAPS 21) NOVEMBER. ON 21 NOVEMBER HE WILL BRIEF ALLIANCE LEADERS IN BRUSSELS ON THE OUTCOME, AND REPORT BACK TO THE US PEOPLE IN A JOINT STATEMENT TO CONGRESS.
3. THIS WILL BE THE FIRST SUCH SUMMIT FOR 6 YEARS. BUT IT IS UNUSUAL ALSO IN A NUMBER OF OTHER RESPECTS.
4. FIRST, IT HAS NOT BEEN PRE-COOKED. THERE IS NO RAFT OF MAJOR INITIALLED DOCUMENTS READY FOR SIGNATURE AND RELEASE, AND THE US AIMS, AS OUTLINED PUBLICLY (MY TELNO 3157), AND PRIVATELY (PARA 3 OF MY TEL NO 3135), ARE FAIRLY ABSTRACT. VARIOUS MINOR TEXTS (EG ON CULTURAL EXCHANGES) ARE READY NOW, AND OTHERS (EG ON THE RESUMPTION OF BILATERAL CIVIL AIR SERVICES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW CONSULATES) MAY STILL BE READIED IN TIME: AND JOINT FORMULAE ON SOME NON-CENTRAL ISSUES (EG NON-PROLIFERATION) HAVE BEEN AGREED. ANNOUNCEMENT OF A JOINT DECISION TO BUILD A PROTOTYPE NUCLEAR FUSION PLANT, WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION, IS ALSO PROBABLE. BUT THERE IS NO AGREED DRAFT, OR EVEN OUTLINE, COMMUNIQUE, AND NO ADVANCE AGREEMENT EVEN ON THE PARAMETERS OF A POSSIBLE SUMMIT QUOTE ACHIEVEMENT UNQUOTE ON THE CENTRAL ISSUE OF ARMS CONTROL.
5. SECONDLY, THERE IS WIDESPREAD UNCERTAINTY HERE AS TO WHAT GORBACHEV WANTS, OR HOW HE IS LIKELY TO PLAY THE SUMMIT. THE SHULTZ/MCFARLANE RECONNAISSANCE VISIT TO MOSCOW ON 4/5 NOVEMBER LEFT THE US TEAM PUBLICLY PESSIMISTIC, PRIVATELY UNCERTAIN, FOLLOWING A COMBATIVE PERFORMANCE BY GORBACHEV.
6. THIRDLY, THERE IS ALSO A DEGREE OF UNCERTAINTY (AND IN SOME QUARTERS APPREHENSION) ABOUT WHAT THE PRESIDENT WANTS, AT LEAST ON ARMS CONTROL. THE REAGAN OF THE SECOND TERM PRESIDENCY REMAINS AS DESCRIBED IN MY DESPATCH OF 6 NOVEMBER 1984: FEELING THAT HE HAS RECOUPED AMERICAN STRENGTH, HE WANTS TO GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS A MAN OF PEACE. BUT HE HAS MADE NONE OF THE PERSONNEL CHANGES WHICH I WARNED MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO PRODUCE A COHESIVE TEAM

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DRIVING TOWARDS THIS GOAL. THE PENTAGON WERE UNHAPPY ABOUT THE TIMING AND CONTENT OF HIS 1 NOVEMBER ARMS CONTROL COUNTER-PROPOSAL AT GENEVA, AND REMAIN HOTLY OPPOSED TO HIS GIVING ANY MORE GROUND AT THE SUMMIT. (PERLE WILL BE IN THE TEAM THERE, BUT WEINBERGER - TO HIS CHAGRIN - WILL NOT: THEIR APPROACH IS QUITE UNLIKE THE PRESIDENT'S).

7. LASTLY, UNEASE AMONG THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISERS ABOUT HOW HE MAY PLAY THE SUMMIT EXTENDS BEYOND THE PENTAGON HARD-LINERS, FOR WHOM THE FACT OF A SUMMIT REPRESENTS A DEFEAT. ALTHOUGH HIS TELEVISION ADDRESS LAST NIGHT (MY TELNO 3157), LIKE HIS UNGA SPEECH ON 25 OCTOBER, PLAYED WELL DOMESTICALLY, THE WHITE HOUSE PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFENSIVE IN THE LAST 3 WEEKS HAS FALTERED WHEN UNSCRIPTED INTERVIEWS HAVE TOUCHED ON DETAILED OR TECHNICAL ISSUES. THE PRESIDENT'S SUGGESTIONS, IN THE IZVESTIA INTERVIEW RELEASED ON 4 NOVEMBER, THAT THERE WOULD BE NO SDI DEPLOYMENT UNTIL ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS EVERYWHERE HAD BEEN ELIMINATED, AND, ON 12 NOVEMBER, THAT THE US WOULD DISCUSS WITH THE RUSSIANS A EUROPEAN NUCLEAR FREE ZONE, HAVE BEEN THE MOST STRIKING OF A SERIES OF MIS-STATEMENTS, WHICH HAVE KEPT ADMINISTRATION SPOKESMEN BUSY WITH CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS.

8. IN SHORT, THE SUMMIT IS NOT JUST TERRA NOVA, BUT TERRA INCOGNITA, AND THE US SHERPAS ARE LESS THAN 100 PCNT CONFIDENT.

9. THIS MAKES PREDICTION PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT. I OF COURSE SEE NO CHANCE THAT THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL CONVICTION THAT THE RUSSIANS CAN BE MADE TO UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT HIS FULL SDI VISION WILL BEAR FRUIT. BUT I REMAIN CONVINCED THAT HE GENUINELY WANTS TO ESTABLISH A PROPER DIALOGUE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL, AND AN IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP ACROSS THE BOARD. FOR PRIMARILY DOMESTIC REASONS, HE HAS TO BE SEEN TO ENGAGE THE RUSSIANS IN A DISCUSSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND QUOTE REGIONAL ISSUES UNQUOTE - PARTICULARLY AFGHANISTAN AND NICARAGUA. BUT I BELIEVE THAT HE WILL TRY TO DO SO IN A NON-HECTORING FASHION. IF GORBACHEV TOO STAYS COOL, WE SHOULD SEE IMPROVED ATMOSPHERICS. IF SO, MY HUNCH IS THAT NEW GUIDELINES TO THE KAMPELMAN/KARPOV GENEVA NEGOTIATORS, DESIGNED TO GIVE THEIR DISCUSSIONS GREATER IMPETUS, AND AGREEMENT ON FURTHER (PERHAPS ANNUAL) SUMMITS SHOULD BE ATTAINABLE.

10. BY THE NEXT SUMMIT THE PRESIDENT MAY BE READY TO ACCEPT THAT SOME CONSTRAINTS ON SDI ARE A NECESSARY AND ACCEPTABLE PRICE FOR THE OFFENSIVE ARMS REDUCTIONS AGREEMENT I BELIEVE HE CERTAINLY WANTS BY 1988.

WRIGHT

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