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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO TOWN HALL OF CALIFORNIA MEETING: 26 AUGUST

SUMMARY

1. PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH ON EAST/WEST ISSUES NOTABLE FOR ITS REFERENCES TO INF AND CALLS FOR GREATER OPENNESS IN MILITARY AFFAIRS.

DETAIL

2. ON 26 AUGUST, PRESIDENT REAGAN ADDRESSED AN AUDIENCE OF BUSINESS AND CLVIC LEADERS ON EAST/WEST AFFAIRS AT A TOWN HALL OF CALIFORNIA MEETING. HIS SPEECH WAS RELAYED LIVE TO A US/SOVIET SYMPOSIUM TAKING PLACE IN CHAUTAUQUA, NEW YORK STATE AND WAS BROADCAST GLOBALLY ON VOICE OF AMERICA AND USIA'S "WORLDNET".

3. MUCH OF THE SPEECH WAS OF A DISCURSIVE NATURE, TRACING THE HISTORY OF EAST/WEST RELATIONS SINCE YALTA. THE MEAT OF THE SPEECH CONCERNED ARMS CONTROL, AND IN PARTICULAR RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ON INF AND PROPOSALS FOR GREATER OPENNESS IN MILITARY AFFAIRS.

4. THE SPEECH WAS DELIVERED BUT HOURS AFTER CHANCELLOR KOHL'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON PERSHING 1A'S (BONN TELNO 656 REFERS). NEVERTHELESS THE SPEECH TOOK ACCOUNT OF THIS, SAYING THAT "EARLIER TODAY CHANCELLOR KOHL REMOVED EVEN THIS ARTIFICIAL OBSTACLE FROM CONSIDERATION". HE WENT ON TO CALL UPON THE SOVIET UNION TO "DEMONSTRATE THAT THERE IS SUBSTANCE BEHIND THE RHETORIC THEY HAVE REPEATED SO OFTEN OF LATE - THAT THEY GENUINELY WANT A STABILISING INF AGREEMENT." THE PRESIDENT ALSO REFERRED TO WRAPPING UP AN INF AGREEMENT PROMPTLY, AND SAID THAT THE US DELEGATION IN GENEVA "HAD ALREADY POINTED THE WAY TO SIMPLIFYING VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS."

5. THE OTHER NOTEWORTHY ASPECT OF THE SPEECH WAS THE PROPOSAL FOR GREATER OPENNESS IN MILITARY AFFAIRS. THE PRESIDENT CALLED UPON THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP TO "SHOW SOME GLASNOST IN YOUR MILITARY AFFAIRS". IN PARTICULAR, HE ASKED THAT THE SOVIET UNION PUBLISH

A VALID BUDGET OF MILITARY EXPENDITURES. SECONDLY, HE CALLED UPON THEM TO NAME PUBLICLY THE SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES. THIRDLY, HE CALLED FOR OPEN DEBATE IN THE SUPREME SOVIET ON MAJOR ISSUES OF MILITARY POLICY AND WEAPONARY. ALL OF THESE WOULD, IN THE PRESIDENT'S WORDS, 'CONTRIBUTE TO GREATER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN US, AND ALSO TO THE GOOD SENSE OF YOUR OWN DECISIONS ON THE GRAVE MATTERS OF ARMAMENTS AND MILITARY POSTURE.'

6. ELSEWHERE THE PRESIDENT REITERATED HIS CALL FOR A 50 PER CENT REDUCTION IN STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCES. HE CHARACTERISED THE US DECISION TO MOVE FORWARD WITH SDI AS 'THE RIGHT DECISION AT THE RIGHT TIME'. AND HE ASKED THAT WESTERN REPORTERS AND EDITORS KEEP THE 'REAL RECORD OF NEGOTIATIONS IN MIND,' CITING A RECENT ECONOMIST ARTICLE REMINDING READERS THAT THE US NOT THE SOVIET UNION HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INF ZERO OPTION AND THE PROPOSAL FOR 50 PER CENT CUTS IN STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCES.

7. IT HAD BEEN EXPECTED THAT CENTRAL AMERICA OR BERLIN MIGHT FEATURE PROMINENTLY. BUT IN THE EVENT REFERENCES TO THESE AND REGIONAL ISSUES WERE FLEETING AND BACKWARD-LOOKING, PADDED OUT WITH EXHORTATIONS CONSISTENT WITH THE SPEECH'S GENERAL THEME OF GREATER OPENNESS AND MOVEMENT TOWARDS REAL DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM.

8. FULL TEXT FOLLOWS BY BAG TO SOVIET DEPARTMENT.

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