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KDB 1/5/2016

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Box Number 25

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172053 CABLE PARIS 0202 7 2/15/1984 B1

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Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

PAGE 01 OF 04 PARIS 0202
SIT661 AN009291

DTG: 151640Z FEB 84 PSN: 053332
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O 151640Z FEB 84 ZYH ZFF4
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

NLR 748-25-12-1-6
BY 1007 NLR DATE 4/24/12

TO THE WHITE HOUSE
STATE DEPT.

25X1

~~SECRET~~ 151640Z FEB 84 VIA PRIVACY CHANNELS

FM THE VICE PRESIDENT 202 SECTION 1 OF 2
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN EYES ONLY
SECSTATE FOR SECRETARY OF STATE SHULTZ EYES ONLY
DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY CASEY EYES ONLY
MOSCOW FOR AMBASSADOR HARTMAN EYES ONLY
SUBJECT: MY MEETING WITH CHERNENKO, FEBRUARY 14, 1984

1. THE MEETING BEGAN WITH CHERNENKO, READING FROM A PREPARED TEXT, EXPRESSING TO US THE GRATITUDE OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP FOR HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE LATE GENERAL SECRETARY ANDROPOV. HE ASKED ME TO TRANSMIT THIS SENTIMENT TO YOU. HE ASKED ME ALSO TO INFORM YOU THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS RETAINING CONTINUITY IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE SAID THIS MEANT THAT THE USSR WAS PURSUING THE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR GOALS OF CONSOLIDATING PEACE AND REDUCING THE THREAT OF WAR, AS WELL AS OF PURSUING PEACEFUL CO-EXISTING BETWEEN STATES WITH DIFFERENT SOCIAL SYSTEMS WITH A VIEW TO PROMOTING BENEFICIAL COOPERATION BETWEEN ALL STATES. AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID THE USSR WOULD SAFEGUARD ITS SECURITY INTERESTS, AS WELL AS THOSE OF ITS ALLIES AND FRIENDS, AGAINST ANY ATTEMPTS TO IMPINGE ON THEIR SECURITY. CHERNENKO WANTED TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD NO INTENTION OF STRIVING FOR UNILATERAL MILITARY-STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE. THE SOVIET OBJECTIVE WAS TO PRESERVE UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

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THE ESTABLISHED BALANCE WITH A VIEW TO ENSURING PEACE. THE U. S. GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR ON THIS.

2. CHERNENKO THEN SAID HE WANTED TO SET FORTH THE SOVIET ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATE OF USSR-US RELATIONS AND OF THEIR PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE. THE CURRENT STATE OF RELATIONS, HE SAID, HAD TO BE A CAUSE FOR CONCERN, ADDING THAT IN HIS OPINION WASHINGTON ALSO RECOGNIZED THIS. FOR ITS PART, THE SOVIET UNION WOULD DO EVERYTHING IT COULD TO PREVENT ALIENATION BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, AND TO PROMOTE A CONSTRUCTIVE INTERACTION BETWEEN THEM, BASED ON MUTUAL RESPECT. CHERNENKO ASKED ME TO INFORM YOU THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS IN FAVOR OF SMOOTH, BETTER YET, GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE U. S. HE ASKED WHETHER THIS WAS POSSIBLE, AND, ANSWERING HIS OWN QUESTION, REPLIED THAT IT CERTAINLY WAS.

3. HE THEN TOOK NOTE OF YOUR EXPRESSION OF INTENT TO COOPERATE WITH THE USSR, AND OF MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER AND MORE PEACEFUL PLACE FOR ALL. THIS REQUIRED, HE SAID, THAT RELATIONS BE BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF EQUALITY AND EQUAL SECURITY, ON MUTUAL TRUST, MUTUAL RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER'S INTERESTS, AND THAT NON-IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES SHOULD NOT BE INTRODUCED INTO SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS. THIS LATTER POINT WAS CRITICAL. OTHERWISE, THE RELATIONS WOULD BE SPASMODIC AND, WHAT WAS MOST IMPORTANT, WOULD LEAD TO MISTRUST RATHER THAN MUTUAL TRUST. CHERNENKO WENT ON TO SAY THAT IT WAS PRIMARILY UP TO OUR TWO COUNTRIES TO INSURE STABILITY AND PREVENT THE THREAT OF A NUCLEAR ARMS RACE, AND TO PROCEED WITH ARMS LIMITATION AND REDUCTION.

4. CHERNENKO SAID THAT TO BE CANDID, THE SOVIET UNION BELIEVED IT WAS UP TO US TO TAKE PRACTICAL STEPS IN THIS DIRECTION. THE U. S. WAS IN A POSITION TO TAKE THESE STEPS, HE SAID, WITHOUT IN ANY WAY HARMING ITS PRESTIGE OR ITS INTERESTS. HE SAID THE SOVIETS HAD NO CONVINCING REASON WHY THE U. S. COULD NOT FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE AND UNDERTAKE NOT TO BE THE FIRST TO USE NUCLEAR ARMS. THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WAS CONVINCED THAT THIS WOULD HELP RELAX THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION. ALL THAT WAS REQUIRED WAS A POLITICAL WILL AND A DESIRE TO REVERSE A DANGEROUS COURSE OF EVENTS.

5. CHERNENKO CONTINUED BY SAYING THAT THERE WERE MANY ISSUES

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REQUIRING SOLUTIONS AND MANY THAT WERE CAPABLE OF BEING SOLVED. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WAS FAMILIAR WITH THESE ISSUES. THE SOVIET POLICY OF PURSUING MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE ACCORDS -- AND HE THEN EMPHASIZED, MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE ACCORDS -- REMAINED UNCHANGED. AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT AND PRESSING PROBLEMS HE WOULD MENTION ARMS LIMITATION AND REDUCTION, STOPPING THE SPREAD OF THE ARMS RACE TO NEW AREAS, AND RESOLVING REGIONAL CONFLICTS, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE PARTIES. TO BE CANDID, THE BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES WERE DEVOID OF MEANINGFUL CONTENT, HE SAID. THIS CONSTITUTED THE SOVIET APPROACH AND THE POSITION OF THE SOVIET UNION. HE THEN SAID HE HOPED THAT YOU AND YOUR ADMINISTRATION WOULD DRAW THE RELEVANT PRACTICAL CONCLUSION. THIS WOULD PERMIT AN IMPROVEMENT IN SOVIET-U.S. RELATIONS AND IN ESTABLISHING THE KIND OF RELATIONS WHICH WOULD PROMOTE PEACE. CHERNENKO TOLD ME THAT THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP DID NOT BELIEVE IN THE INEVITABILITY OF A CONFRONTATION. THE SOVIET AND U.S. PEOPLES HAD NOT INHERITED HOSTILITY TOWARD EACH OTHER, HE SAID, ADDING THAT HE DID NOT WANT SUCH HOSTILITIES TO OCCUR IN THE FUTURE.

6. I THANKED CHERNENKO FOR HIS REMARKS AND NOTED THAT CHERNENKO HAD HAD A VERY BUSY DAY AND THAT HE HAD SEVERAL TRAUMATIC DAYS BEHIND HIM. I TOLD HIM THAT SENATOR BAKER AND I HAD COME TO OFFER OUR SINCERE CONDOLENCES. HE THANKED ME FOR THIS SENTIMENT.

7. AFTER HANDING OVER YOUR LETTER, WHICH I TOLD HIM REFLECTED YOUR SINCERE FEELINGS, I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS ABSOLUTELY CONVINCED THAT, IN FACT, WE DID NOT WANT TO BE DRAWN INTO ANY KIND OF CON-

FLICT WITH THE SOVIET UNION. AS YOU HAD SAID IN YOUR JANUARY 16, 1984 SPEECH, THE U.S. WAS PREPARED TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP BASED ON CONSTRUCTIVE COOPERATION. JUST AS CHERNENKO HAD SAID, WE, TOO, BELIEVED THAT GOOD RELATIONS WERE POSSIBLE. WE, TO, RECOGNIZED THAT THERE WERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US, AND LIKE THE USSR, THE U.S. WOULD DEFEND ITS OWN INTERESTS AND THOSE OF ITS ALLIES. HOWEVER, THE U.S. DID NOT WISH TO CHALLENGE THE SECURITY OF THE SOVIET UNION OR ITS PEOPLE. WE, TOO, AGREED THAT THE TIME HAD COME TO MOVE FROM WORDS TO DEEDS.

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8. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT IN THE U.S. VIEW, THE MEETING BETWEEN SECRETARY SHULTZ AND MINISTER GROMYKO HAD IDENTIFIED AREAS IN WHICH PROGRESS WAS POSSIBLE IN THE COMING MONTHS AND WE WANTED TO MAKE A BEGINNING TOWARDS A BETTER AND MORE PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP. IF REAL PROGRESS ON THE ISSUES WERE MADE -- IF THERE WAS A PROSPECT FOR SERIOUS PROGRESS -- THEN YOU REMAINED INTERESTED IN
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO THE WHITE HOUSE
[REDACTED] STATE DEPT.

25X1

S E C R E T 151640Z FEB 84 VIA PRIVACY CHANNELS

FM THE VICE PRESIDENT 202 FINAL SECTION OF 2
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN EYES ONLY
SECSTATE FOR SECRETARY OF STATE SHULTZ EYES ONLY
DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY CASEY EYES ONLY
MOSCOW FOR AMBASSADOR HARTMAN EYES ONLY
A MEETING AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL.

9. I TOLD HIM THAT WE ESPECIALLY WANTED TO AVOID CONFLICTS OVER REGIONAL ISSUES. THE MIDDLE EAST WAS THE MIDDLE EAST, AND THUS WAS ALWAYS DIFFICULT. WITH RESPECT TO LEBANON, IN PARTICULAR, WE WERE NOT SEEKING A CONFLICT WITH THE SOVIET UNION, I SAID, NOR WERE WE SEEKING A PERMANENT U.S. PRESENCE THERE.

10. I THEN EMPHASIZED THAT THE U.S. WANTED TO MOVE FORWARD ON ARMS CONTROL. WE BELIEVED THAT START WAS ONE AREA IN WHICH CONSTRUCTIVE STEPS WERE POSSIBLE TOWARD ACHIEVING OUR MUTUAL GOAL OF REDUCING STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS. WE WERE READY, I TOLD HIM, FOR SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. FRANKLY, WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HEARING THE SOVIET SIDE'S IDEAS ON HOW TO REDUCE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES ON START. WE BELIEVED IT USEFUL TO FOCUS ON THE AREA OF TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN SOVIET ADVANTAGES AND U.S. ADVANTAGES. OUR OVERALL OBJECTIVE WAS TO FIND A FRAMEWORK FOR A GENERAL REDUCTION OF STRATEGIC ARMS WHICH, BOTH SIDES AGREED, HAD SO FAR

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ELUDED US.

11. NOTING HIS STATEMENT CONCERNING INTERFERENCE IN THE DOMESTIC AFFAIRS OF THE OTHER COUNTRY, I SAID WE KNEW HOW SERIOUSLY THE SOVIET UNION VIEWED THIS MATTER. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE MOST USEFUL IF WE WERE ABLE TO FIND WAYS FOR TAKING PRACTICAL STEPS -- AND I EMPHASIZED THAT THEY SHOULD INVOLVE QUIET DIPLOMACY -- IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS. A NUMBER OF THESE CASES HAD BECOME IMPORTANT U.S. DOMESTIC CONCERNS. I TOLD HIM THAT THEY HAD HEARD VARIOUS NAMES FROM US IN THE PAST, BUT I WANTED TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MENTION SHCHARANSKIY, ORLOV AND SAKHAROV.

12. WITH THE MEETING DRAWING TO A CLOSE, I REMARKED THAT THERE WAS FAR MORE TO DISCUSS, BUT THAT I WANTED TO END ON THE NOTE ON WHICH I HAD BEGUN, NAMELY THAT THE U.S. WAS READY FOR BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. WE WERE AWARE OF THE DIFFICULTIES, OF COURSE. BUT WE HAD NOT COME TO MOSCOW TO ASSIGN BLAME OR TO ESCALATE THE RHETORIC. THIS SHOULD BE A NEW BEGINNING. WE WERE PREPARED TO MEET THEM HALF WAY.

13. HE THANKED ME FOR MY REMARKS, EXPRESSING HIS GRATITUDE TO ME FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COME TO MOSCOW AT SUCH A DIFFICULT MOMENT. HE ASKED THAT THIS SENTIMENT ALSO BE EXPRESSED TO YOU. HE SAID THAT MY VISIT WAS A HUMAN KIND OF GESTURE, A GOOD GESTURE WHICH WENT IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. THE SOVIET SIDE HOPED FOR FURTHER STEPS TOWARDS IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN US. EVEN THIS BRIEF DISCUSSION, HE SAID, HAD SHOWN THAT WE HAD THINGS TO TALK ABOUT, AND THAT THERE WERE ISSUES WHICH COULD BE RESOLVED ON A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE BASIS. HE SAID THAT THROUGH NO FAULT OF OUR OWN, WE SHOULDERED THE TASK OF LEADING TWO GREAT POWERS, THE USSR AND THE U.S. THIS BEING THE CASE, HE SAID, WE SHOULD PURSUE AN HONORABLE POLICY IN ORDER THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS REMEMBER US AS GOOD LEADERS, WISE AND KIND INDIVIDUALS WHOSE GOAL WAS THE WELL BEING OF ALL. HE FINISHED BY AGAIN EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO YOU AND THANKING ME AND SENATOR BAKER FOR ATTENDING THE FUNERAL.

14. AS I DEPARTED, CHERNENKO REMARKED THAT HE HAD NOT HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO READ YOUR LETTER, BUT PROMISED TO STUDY IT AND PROVIDE A RESPONSE IF ONE WAS APPROPRIATE.

15. AS I REPORTED IN MY EARLIER MESSAGE, I WAS BASICALLY

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ENCOURAGED BY THE MEETING.

16. I THOUGHT YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN AMBASSADOR HARTMAN'S OBSERVATIONS. HIS EXPERIENCE GIVES HIM AN EXCELLENT PERSPECTIVE. AMBASSADOR'S COMMENTS:

CHERNENKO RECEIVED VICE PRESIDENT WITH GROMKO, DOBRYNIN, ALEXANDROV AND ANOTHER ASSISTANT WITH SUKHODREV AS INTERPRETER. HE READ HIS OPENING STATEMENT IN A STRONG VOICE BUT WITH HIS USUAL SLURRING OF WORDS. HE APPEARED FIT AND IN GOOD HUMOR. HIS DRESS WAS IMMACULATE; SUIT WELL-TAILORED, SHIRT WELL-MADE. BOTH HE AND GROMYKO WERE AT PAINS TO BE PLEASANT AND WELCOMING. CHERNENKO HAD SLIGHT SHORTNESS OF BREATH AS HE BEGAN TO READ. HE DID NOT WEAR GLASSES WHICH WERE ON TABLE IN FRONT OF HIM. GROMYKO MADE ONLY ONE ATTEMPT TO ADD OR CORRECT BY BEING MORE EXPLICIT IN SAYING THAT, IF THERE WERE POINTS IN PRESIDENT'S LETTER THAT REQUIRED RESPONSE, THERE WOULD BE ANSWER AFTER THEY HAD A CHANCE TO STUDY LETTER. ALEXANDROV, EARLIER NEAR RECEIVING LINE AND DURING MEETING, MADE SPECIAL EFFORT (UNLIKE OTHER RECENT CONTACTS) TO CONVEY A FRIENDLY MESSAGE AND EXPRESS HIS OWN APPRECIATION FOR VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT.

IN SUM, AMBASSADOR HAD AN IMPRESSION OF BREZHNEV RE-VISITED. UNLIKE ANDROPOV WHO WAS COLDLY, HUMORLESSLY INTELLECTUAL, CHERNENKO APPEARS TO BE THE OLD WILY RUSSIAN PEASANT-TYPE BUT WITH AN OVER-LAY OF HAVING RUN A POLITBURO SECRETARIAT FOR MANY YEARS. THERE IS ALSO NO DOUBT THAT THE MEMORIES OF ANDROPOV WERE FADING FAST AS THIS NEW LEADER ENJOYED EVERY MOMENT OF THE IRONIC SITUATION HE FOUND HIMSELF IN -- A LOSER WHO BECAME A WINNER. MANY

WERE STRUCK, HOWEVER, BY THE SIGHT OF AN UNKNOWN INDIVIDUAL HOLDING CHERNENKO'S ARM FIRMLY; CHERNENKO WAS THE ONLY POLITBURO MEMBER WHO APPEARED TO BE AIDED DOWN THE STEPS (TWICE) FROM THE TOP OF THE LENIN MAUSOLEUM. WOULD THERE BE ANOTHER RENDEZVOUS IN FIFTEEN MONTHS> DECL OADR.

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CHERNENKO...THE NEW GENERAL SECRETARY

2/15/84

VIDEO

AUDIO

THIS TELEPRODUCTION WAS PRODUCED BY THE
DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE. IT IS CLASSIFIED
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IN CHOOSING 72-YEAR-OLD KONSTANTIN CHERNENKO AS
ANDROPOV'S SUCCESSOR, THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP HAS
OPTED FOR THE POLITICAL STATUS QUO, AS OPPOSED
TO THE UNCERTAINTY THAT SELECTION OF A YOUNGER
LEADER MIGHT HAVE CREATED.

THIS "HOLDING ACTION", HOWEVER, COULD STIMULATE
RESENTMENT AMONG RISING CADRES, LEADING TO
STRAIN IN THE HIGHER PARTY RANKS. AS A RESULT,
WE ANTICIPATE A PERIOD OF MORE OVERT
POLITICKING AMONG THE LEADERSHIP.

FOR NOW, THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY WOULD LIKELY
SEE THE CHOICE OF CHERNENKO AS THE PARTY LEADER
WHO BEST REPRESENTS CONTINUITY OF BREZHNEV'S
BROAD POLICY OUTLINE.

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CHERNENKO...THE NEW GENERAL SECRETARY

2/15/84

VIDEO

AUDIO

CHERNENKO HAS SPENT HIS ENTIRE ADULT LIFE - 54 YEARS- IN THE SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY. BUT HE DID NOT BECOME A FULL MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE UNTIL 1971 WHEN HE BEGAN HIS RAPID RISE WITHIN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP.

THE KEY TO THE ADVANCEMENT WAS BREZHNEV, WHOM HE SERVED IN VARIOUS CAPACITIES FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, STARTING WITH THEIR PARTY DAYS IN MOLDAVIA IN THE EARLY 50'S.

AFTER 10 YEARS WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES AS THE LEADERSHIP'S TOP ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, CHERNENKO WAS PROMOTED THREE TIMES BETWEEN APRIL, 1976 AND NOVEMBER, 1978. DURING THE PROCESS HE BECAME ONE OF FOUR IN THE HIERARCHY WHO WERE SIMULTANEOUSLY PARTY SECRETARIES AND FULL MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO. BREZHNEV, ANDREY KIRILENKO, AND MIKHAIL

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CHERNENKO...THE NEW GENERAL SECRETARY

2/15/84

VIDEO

AUDIO

SUSLOV - ALL NOW EITHER DECEASED OR RETIRED -
WERE THE OTHERS.

BREZHNEV GAVE CHERNENKO MANY OPPORTUNITIES
TO IMPROVE HIS CHANCES OF BECOMING THE GENERAL
SECRETARY BUT COULD NOT CLINCH THE JOB FOR HIM
BEFORE HE DIED. IN NOVEMBER, 1982 CHERNENKO
WAS REPORTED TO LACK THE SUPPORT HE NEEDED
FROM SUCH KEY LEADERS AS FOREIGN MINISTER
GROMYKO AND DEFENSE MINISTER USTINOV.

THIS TIME, THE CIRCUMSTANCES WERE DIFFERENT.
SICKNESS, DEATH, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF
EARLIER POLITICAL BATTLES HAD SO REDUCED THE
LEADERSHIP RANKS THAT CHERNENKO WAS ONE OF
THE FEW WHO COULD LAY CLAIM TO CONTINUING
THE BREZHNEV LEGACY.

AS A BREZHNEV PROTEGE, CHERNENKO ECHOED
MANY OF HIS PATRON'S FAVORITE THEMES, INCLUDING

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CHERNENKO...THE NEW GENERAL SECRETARY

2/15/84

VIDEO

AUDIO

THE IMPORTANCE OF DETENTE. IN 1979, HE WENT FURTHER THAN ANY LEADER OTHER THAN BREZHNEV IN STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEXT STAGE IN "SALT III". NOW THAT HE IS GENERAL SECRETARY, HOWEVER, CHERNENKO PROBABLY WILL TAILOR HIS FOREIGN POLICY REFERENCES TO THE DEMANDS OF A BROADER CONSTITUANCY. HIS LATITUDE IN THIS AREA, MOREOVER, IS LIKELY TO BE CONSTRICTED AS LONG AS FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO AND DEFENSE MINISTER USTINOV REMAIN FIRMLY ENTRENCHED IN THE LEADERSHIP.

THE INCLUSION OF GROMYKO AND USTINOV AS FUNERAL SPEAKERS SUGGESTS THAT BOTH ARE ASSERTING THEIR PREROGATIVES AS SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO. IN VIEW OF THEIR REPORTED OPPOSITION TO CHERNENKO IN 1982, THE INCLUSION OF ALL THREE AS FUNERAL SPEAKERS ALSO SUGGESTS THAT AN APPEARANCE OF TOP-LEVEL SOLIDARITY IS INTENDED.

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CHERNENKO...THE NEW GENERAL SECRETARY

2/15/84

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AUDIO

CHERNENKO HAS VISITED THE UNITED STATES - IN 1974 WHEN HE ATTENDED A UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION. U.S. OFFICIALS FOUND HIM TO BE AN EXTROVERTED, UNSOPHISTICATED MAN, ALWAYS READY TO ENGAGE IN SMALL TALK.

THE NEW SOVIET LEADER HAS COME ACROSS, HOWEVER AS AN EXCEPTIONALLY POOR PUBLIC SPEAKER. HE DOES NOT SPEAK ENGLISH.

CHERNENKO'S HEALTH SEEMED TO BE GOOD UNTIL LAST APRIL. AT THAT TIME A CASE OF THE FLU TURNED INTO A LONG BOUT WITH PNEUMONIA. HE WAS RELEASED FROM THE HOSPITAL AFTER THREE WEEKS BUT IN JUNE APPEARED TO BE WEAK AND HAVING DIFFICULTY WITH COUGHING AND SHORTNESS OF BREATH. FOLLOWING AN EXTENDED VACATION HE RETURNED TO WORK IN EARLY SEPTEMBER BUT CONTINUED TO HAVE BREATHING PROBLEMS. THE

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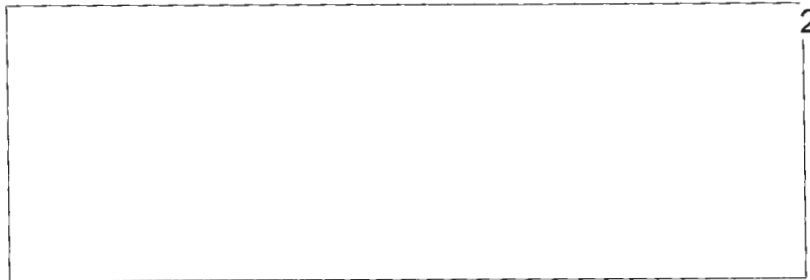
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CHERNENKO...THE NEW GENERAL SECRETARY

2/15/84

VIDEO

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HE MAY HAVE A HIGHER THAN NORMAL
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO PULMONARY INFECTION. AT THIS
TIME, HOWEVER, WE HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF AILMENTS
THAT WOULD BE LIKELY TO LIMIT HIS PERFORMANCE
IN OFFICE.

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Feb 15

Mr. McFarlane LDX'd attached cable
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BY 6008 NARA DATE 1/26/12

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State Dept. review completed

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SECRET 151642Z FEB 84 VIA PRIVAC

FM THE VICE PRESIDENT 202 SECTION 1 OF 2

TO: THE WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN EYES ONLY

SPESTATE FOR SECRETARY OF STATE SHULTZ EYES ONLY

DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY CASEY EYES ONLY

MOSCOW FOR AMBASSADOR HARTMAN EYES ONLY

SUBJECT: MY MEETING WITH CHERNENKO, FEBRUARY 14, 1984

1. THE MEETING BEGAN WITH CHERNENKO, READING FROM A PREPARED TEXT, EXPRESSING TO US THE GRATITUDE OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP FOR HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE LATE GENERAL SECRETARY ANDROPOV. HE ASKED ME TO TRANSMIT THIS SENTIMENT TO YOU. HE ASKED ME ALSO TO INFORM YOU THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS RETAINING CONTINUITY IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE SAID THIS MEANT THAT THE USSR WAS PURSUING THE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR GOALS OF CONSOLIDATING PEACE AND REDUCING THE THREAT OF WAR, AS WELL AS OF PURSUING PEACEFUL CO-EXISTING BETWEEN STATES WITH DIFFERENT SOCIAL SYSTEMS WITH A VIEW TO PROMOTING BENEFICIAL COOPERATION BETWEEN ALL STATES. AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID THE USSR WOULD SAFEGUARD ITS SECURITY INTERESTS, AS WELL AS THOSE OF ITS ALLIES AND FRIENDS, AGAINST ANY ATTEMPTS TO IMPINGE ON THEIR SECURITY. CHERNENKO WANTED TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD NO INTENTION OF STRIVING FOR UNILATERAL MILITARY-STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE. THE SOVIET OBJECTIVE WAS TO PRESERVE UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES THE ESTABLISHED BALANCE WITH A VIEW TO ENSURING PEACE. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR ON THIS.

2. CHERNENKO THEN SAID HE WANTED TO SET FORTH THE SOVIET ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATE OF USSR-US RELATIONS AND OF THEIR PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE. THE CURRENT STATE OF RELATIONS, HE SAID, HAD TO BE A CAUSE FOR CONCERN, ADDING THAT IN HIS OPINION WASHINGTON ALSO RECOGNIZED THIS. FOR ITS PART, THE SOVIET UNION WOULD DO EVERYTHING IT COULD TO PREVENT ALIENATION BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, AND TO PROMOTE A CONSTRUCTIVE INTERACTION BETWEEN THEM, BASED ON MUTUAL RESPECT. CHERNENKO ASKED ME TO INFORM YOU THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS IN FAVOR OF SMOOTH, BETTER YET, GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. HE ASKED WHETHER THIS WAS POSSIBLE, AND, ANSWERING HIS OWN QUESTION, REPLIED THAT IT CERTAINLY WAS.

3. HE THEN TOOK NOTE OF YOUR EXPRESSION OF INTENT TO COOPERATE WITH THE USSR, AND OF MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER AND MORE PEACEFUL PLACE FOR ALL. THIS REQUIRED, HE SAID, THAT RELATIONS BE BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF EQUALITY AND EQUAL SECURITY, ON MUTUAL TRUST, MUTUAL RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER'S INTERESTS, AND THAT NON-IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES SHOULD NOT BE INTRODUCED INTO SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS. THIS LATTER POINT WAS CRITICAL. OTHERWISE, THE RELATIONS WOULD BE SPASMODIC AND, WHAT WAS MOST IMPORTANT, WOULD LEAD TO MISTRUST RATHER THAN MUTUAL TRUST. CHERNENKO WENT ON TO SAY THAT IT WAS PRIMARILY UP TO OUR TWO COUNTRIES TO INSURE STABILITY AND PREVENT THE THREAT OF A NUCLEAR ARMS RACE, AND TO PROCEED WITH ARMS LIMITATION AND REDUCTION.

BELIEVED IT WAS UP TO US TO TAKE PRACTICAL STEPS IN THIS DIRECTION. THE U.S. WAS IN A POSITION TO TAKE THESE STEPS, HE SAID, WITHOUT IN ANY WAY HARMING ITS PRESTIGE OR ITS INTERESTS. HE SAID THE SOVIETS HAD NO CONVINCING REASON WHY THE U.S. COULD NOT FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE AND UNDERTAKE NOT TO BE THE FIRST TO USE NUCLEAR ARMS. THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WAS CONVINCED THAT THIS WOULD HELP RELAX THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION. ALL THAT WAS REQUIRED WAS A POLITICAL WILL AND A DESIRE TO REVERSE A DANGEROUS COURSE OF EVENTS.

5. CHERNENKO CONTINUED BY SAYING THAT THERE WERE MANY ISSUES REQUIRING SOLUTIONS AND MANY THAT WERE CAPABLE OF BEING SOLVED. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WAS FAMILIAR WITH THESE ISSUES. THE SOVIET POLICY OF PURSUING MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE ACCORDS -- AND HE THEN EMPHASIZED, MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE ACCORDS -- REMAINED UNCHANGED. AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT AND PRESSING PROBLEMS HE WOULD MENTION ARMS LIMITATION AND REDUCTION, STOPPING THE SPREAD OF THE ARMS RACE TO NEW AREAS, AND RESOLVING REGIONAL CONFLICTS, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE PARTIES. TO BE CANDID, THE BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES WERE DEVOID OF MEANINGFUL CONTENT, HE SAID. THIS CONSTITUTED THE SOVIET APPROACH AND THE POSITION OF THE SOVIET UNION. HE THEN SAID HE HOPED THAT YOU AND YOUR ADMINISTRATION WOULD DRAW THE RELEVANT PRACTICAL CONCLUSION. THIS WOULD PERMIT AN IMPROVEMENT IN SOVIET-U.S. RELATIONS AND IN ESTABLISHING THE KIND OF RELATIONS WHICH WOULD PROMOTE PEACE. CHERNENKO TOLD ME THAT THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP DID NOT BELIEVE IN THE INEVITABILITY OF A CONFRONTATION. THE SOVIET AND U.S. PEOPLES HAD NOT INHERITED HOSTILITY TOWARD EACH OTHER, HE SAID, ADDING THAT HE DID NOT WANT SUCH HOSTILITIES TO OCCUR IN THE FUTURE.

6. I THANKED CHERNENKO FOR HIS REMARKS AND NOTED THAT CHERNENKO HAD HAD A VERY BUSY DAY AND THAT HE HAD SEVERAL TRAUMATIC DAYS BEHIND HIM. I TOLD HIM THAT SENATOR BAKER AND I HAD COME TO OFFER OUR SINCERE CONDOLENCES. HE THANKED ME FOR THIS SENTIMENT.

7. AFTER HANDING OVER YOUR LETTER, WHICH I TOLD HIM REFLECTED YOUR SINCERE FEELINGS, I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS ABSOLUTELY CONVINCED THAT, IN FACT, WE DID NOT WANT TO BE DRAWN INTO ANY KIND OF CONFLICT WITH THE SOVIET UNION. AS YOU HAD SAID IN YOUR JANUARY 16, 1984 SPEECH, THE U.S. WAS PREPARED TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP BASED ON CONSTRUCTIVE COOPERATION. JUST AS CHERNENKO HAD SAID, WE, TOO, BELIEVED THAT GOOD RELATIONS WERE POSSIBLE. WE, TO, RECOGNIZED THAT THERE WERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US, AND LIKE THE USSR, THE U.S. WOULD DEFEND ITS OWN INTERESTS AND THOSE OF ITS ALLIES. HOWEVER, THE U.S. DID NOT WISH TO CHALLENGE THE SECURITY OF THE SOVIET UNION OR ITS PEOPLE. WE, TOO, AGREED THAT THE TIME HAD COME TO MOVE FROM WORDS TO DEEDS.

8. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT IN THE U.S. VIEW, THE MEETING BETWEEN SECRETARY SHULTZ AND MINISTER GROMYKO HAD IDENTIFIED AREAS IN WHICH PROGRESS WAS POSSIBLE IN THE COMING MONTHS AND WE WANTED TO MAKE A BEGINNING TOWARDS A BETTER AND MORE PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP. IF REAL PROGRESS ON THE ISSUES WERE MADE -- IF THERE WAS A PROSPECT FOR SERIOUS PROGRESS -- THEN YOU REMAINED INTERESTED IN

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FM THE VICE PRESIDENT 202 FINAL SECTION OF 2

TO: THE WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN EYES ONLY

SECSTATE FOR SECRETARY OF STATE SHULTZ EYES ONLY

DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY CASEY EYES ONLY

MOSCOW FOR AMBASSADOR HARTMAN EYES ONLY

A MEETING AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL.

9. I TOLD HIM THAT WE ESPECIALLY WANTED TO AVOID CONFLICTS OVER REGIONAL ISSUES. THE MIDDLE EAST WAS THE MIDDLE EAST, AND THUS WAS ALWAYS DIFFICULT. WITH RESPECT TO LEBANON, IN PARTICULAR, WE WERE NOT SEEKING A CONFLICT WITH THE SOVIET UNION, I SAID, NOR WERE WE SEEKING A PERMANENT U.S. PRESENCE THERE.

10. I THEN EMPHASIZED THAT THE U.S. WANTED TO MOVE FORWARD ON ARMS CONTROL. WE BELIEVED THAT START WAS ONE AREA IN WHICH CONSTRUCTIVE STEPS WERE POSSIBLE TOWARD ACHIEVING OUR MUTUAL GOAL OF REDUCING STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS. WE WERE READY, I TOLD HIM, FOR SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. FRANKLY, WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HEARING THE SOVIET SIDE'S IDEAS ON HOW TO REDUCE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES ON START. WE BELIEVED IT USEFUL TO FOCUS ON THE AREA OF TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN SOVIET ADVANTAGES AND U.S. ADVANTAGES. OUR OVERALL OBJECTIVE WAS TO FIND A FRAMEWORK FOR A GENERAL REDUCTION OF STRATEGIC ARMS WHICH, BOTH SIDES AGREED, HAD SO FAR ELUDED US.

11. NOTING HIS STATEMENT CONCERNING INTERFERENCE IN THE DOMESTIC AFFAIRS OF THE OTHER COUNTRY, I SAID WE KNEW HOW SERIOUSLY THE SOVIET UNION VIEWED THIS MATTER. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE MOST USEFUL IF WE WERE ABLE TO FIND WAYS FOR TAKING PRACTICAL STEPS -- AND I EMPHASIZED THAT THEY SHOULD INVOLVE QUIET DIPLOMACY -- IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS. A NUMBER OF THESE CASES HAD BECOME IMPORTANT U.S. DOMESTIC CONCERNS. I TOLD HIM THAT THEY HAD HEARD VARIOUS NAMES FROM US IN THE PAST, BUT I WANTED TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MENTION SHCHARANSKIY, ORLOV AND SAKHAROV.

12. WITH THE MEETING DRAWING TO A CLOSE, I REMARKED THAT THERE WAS FAR MORE TO DISCUSS, BUT THAT I WANTED TO END ON THE NOTE ON WHICH I HAD BEGUN, NAMELY THAT THE U.S. WAS READY FOR BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. WE WERE AWARE OF THE DIFFICULTIES, OF COURSE. BUT WE HAD NOT COME TO MOSCOW TO ASSIGN BLAME OR TO ESCALATE THE RHETORIC. THIS SHOULD BE A NEW BEGINNING. WE WERE PREPARED TO MEET THEM HALF WAY.

13. HE THANKED ME FOR MY REMARKS, EXPRESSING HIS GRATITUDE TO ME FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COME TO MOSCOW AT SUCH A DIFFICULT MOMENT. HE ASKED THAT THIS SENTIMENT ALSO BE EXPRESSED TO YOU. HE SAID THAT MY VISIT WAS A HUMAN KIND OF GESTURE, A GOOD GESTURE WHICH WENT IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. THE SOVIET SIDE HOPED FOR FURTHER STEPS TOWARDS IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN US. EVEN THIS BRIEF DISCUSSION, HE SAID, HAD SHOWN THAT WE HAD THINGS TO TALK ABOUT, AND THAT THERE WERE ISSUES WHICH COULD BE RESOLVED ON A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE BASIS. HE SAID THAT THROUGH NO FAULT OF ONE

13. WE SHOULDered THE TASK OF LEADING TWO GREAT POWERS, THE USSR AND THE U.S. THIS BEING THE CASE, HE SAID, WE SHOULD PURSUE AN INDEPENDENT POLICY IN ORDER THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS REMEMBER US AS GOOD LEADERS, WISE AND KIND INDIVIDUALS WHOSE GOAL WAS THE WELL BEING OF ALL. HE FINISHED BY AGAIN EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO YOU AND THANKING ME AND SENATOR BAKER FOR ATTENDING THE FUNERAL.

14. AS I DEPARTED, CHERNENKO REMARKED THAT HE HAD NOT HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO READ YOUR LETTER, BUT PROMISED TO STUDY IT AND PROVIDE A RESPONSE IF ONE WAS APPROPRIATE.

15. AS I REPORTED IN MY EARLIER MESSAGE, I WAS BASICALLY ENCOURAGED BY THE MEETING.

16. I THOUGHT YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN AMBASSADOR HARTMAN'S OBSERVATIONS. HIS EXPERIENCE GIVES HIM AN EXCELLENT PERSPECTIVE. AMBASSADOR'S COMMENTS:

CHERNENKO RECEIVED VICE PRESIDENT WITH GROMKO, DOBRYNIN, ALEXANDROV AND ANOTHER ASSISTANT WITH SUKHODREV AS INTERPRETER. HE READ HIS OPENING STATEMENT IN A STRONG VOICE BUT WITH HIS USUAL SLURRING OF WORDS. HE APPEARED FIT AND IN GOOD HUMOR. HIS DRESS WAS IMMACULATE; SUIT WELL-TAILORED, SHIRT WELL-MADE. BOTH HE AND GROMKO WERE AT PAINS TO BE PLEASANT AND WELCOMING. CHERNENKO HAD SLIGHT SHORTNESS OF BREATH AS HE BEGAN TO READ. HE DID NOT WEAR GLASSES WHICH WERE ON TABLE IN FRONT OF HIM. GROMKO MADE ONLY ONE ATTEMPT TO ADD OR CORRECT BY BEING MORE EXPLICIT IN SAYING THAT, IF THERE WERE POINTS IN PRESIDENT'S LETTER THAT REQUIRED RESPONSE, THERE WOULD BE ANSWER AFTER THEY HAD A CHANCE TO STUDY LETTER. ALEXANDROV, EARLIER NEAR RECEIVING LINE AND DURING MEETING, MADE SPECIAL EFFORT (UNLIKE OTHER RECENT CONTACTS) TO CONVEY A FRIENDLY MESSAGE AND EXPRESS HIS OWN APPRECIATION FOR VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT.

IN SUM, AMBASSADOR HAD AN IMPRESSION OF BREZHNEV RE-VISITED. UNLIKE ANDROPOV WHO WAS COLDLY, HUMORLESSLY INTELLECTUAL, CHERNENKO APPEARS TO BE THE OLD WILT RUSSIAN PEASANT-TYPE BUT WITH AN OVER-LAY OF HAVING RUN A POLITBURO SECRETARIAT FOR MANY YEARS. THERE IS ALSO NO DOUBT THAT THE MEMORIES OF ANDROPOV WERE FAADING FAST AS THIS NEW LEADER ENJOYED EVERY MOMENT OF THE IRONIC SITUATION HE FOUND HIMSELF IN -- A LOSER WHO BECAME A WINNER. MANY WERE STRUCK, HOWEVER, BY THE SIGHT OF AN UNKNOWN INDIVIDUAL HOLDING CHERNENKO'S ARM FIRMLY; CHERNENKO WAS THE ONLY POLITBURO MEMBER WHO APPEARED TO BE AIDED DOWN THE STEPS (TWICE) FROM THE TOP OF THE LENIN MAUSOLEUM. WOULD THERE BE ANOTHER RENDEZVOUS IN FIFTEEN MONTHS? DEC. QADR.

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