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Precedence IMMEDIATE/PRIORITY
DTG 161430Z JUN 99
From BRITREP MOSCOW
To FCO LONDON
Info MODUK
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SIC A2P I9F
Subject KOSOVO : IMPACT ON RUSSIA

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FM MOSCOW
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
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OF 161430Z JUNE 99
INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK, SECURITY COUNCIL POSTS
INFO PRIORITY UKDEL NATO, NATO POSTS, UKDEL VIENNA
INFO PRIORITY UKDIS GENEVA, UKMIS VIENNA, TOKYO, OSCE POSTS
INFO PRIORITY CABINET OFFICE, MODUK, ACTOR, WHIRL, EU POSTS
INFO PRIORITY NEW DELHI, ISLAMABAD, UKREP BRUSSELS
SIC A2P/I9F

SUBJECT: KOSOVO : IMPACT ON RUSSIA

SUMMARY

1. NATO ACTION SEEN AS BLOW TO UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND THREAT TO RUSSIAN INTERESTS. RE-FORMING NATO/RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP AND REBUILDING MUTUAL TRUST LIKELY TO BE A SLOW PROCESS.

DETAIL

2. NATO SUCCESS IN PROSECUTING ITS MILITARY CAMPAIGN AND ACHIEVING TANGIBLE POLITICAL RESULTS HAS LEFT RUSSIA BRUISED AND BEWILDERED. FIRST, BECAUSE NATO RESORTED TO MILITARY ACTION IN THE FACE OF DIRECT RUSSIAN OPPOSITION. SECOND, BECAUSE MOST RUSSIANS BELIEVED THAT NATO WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO BRING MILOSEVIC TO HEEL THROUGH THE USE OF AIR POWER. THIRD, BECAUSE NATOS CAMPAIGN IS REGARDED AS SETTING A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT FOR MILITARY ACTION WITHOUT UN SECURITY COUNCIL AUTHORITY, REDUCING THE WEIGHT OF THE RUSSIAN VETO.

3. THE SURPRISE RUSSIAN DEPLOYMENT TO PRISTINA HAS HELPED TO ASSUAGE IMMEDIATE RUSSIAN FRUSTRATIONS, BUT THE LONGER TERM IMPLICATIONS OF NATO ACTION FOR RUSSIA AND ITS RELATIONS WITH THE WEST ARE MORE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO GAUGE. RATIONAL CALCULATIONS OF NATIONAL INTEREST WILL NO DOUBT IN MANY CASES OVERRIDE HURT PRIDE, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT SOME OF THE EFFECTS OF NATO ACTION WILL BE LONGLASTING. CERTAIN THEMES ARE ALREADY APPARENT :

- RUSSIA SEES MILITARY ACTION AS THE PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF NATOS NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT, SETTING AN UNACCEPTABLE PRECEDENT FOR ACTION OUT OF AREA, CIRCUMVENTING THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL IF

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NECESSARY. THE KOSOVO CAMPAIGN HAS REINFORCED THE PERCEPTION HERE OF AN EXPANDING NATO AS A POWERFUL TOOL FOR THE IMPOSITION OF US WILL IN EUROPE (PERVERSELY ACCOMPANIED BY A GROWING INCLINATION TO DEAL WITH THE US BILATERALLY). MOSCOW WILL HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY THE WAY IN WHICH NATO, ESPECIALLY INCLUDING THE NEW ALLIES, HAS HELD TOGETHER.

not perverse at all

- RUSSIA HAS AN INTEREST IN REASSERTING THE AUTHORITY OF THE UNSC, BUT FACES A DILEMMA. IMPLACABLE OPPOSITION IN THE UNSC TO US POLICIES INVOLVING THE USE OF FORCE PARALYSES THE COUNCIL, PROVOKING PRECISELY THE SORT OF ACTION OUTSIDE THE UN WHICH MOSCOW REJECTS SO STRONGLY ON GROUNDS OF PRINCIPLE. SO FAR, ANALYSTS IN MOSCOW HAVE FOCUSED IN RESPONSE ON THE POSSIBILITY OF ALIGNING RUSSIAN POLICIES WITH PEKING AND NEW DELHI, BUT SO FAR WITHOUT MUCH CONVICTION AS TO WHETHER THIS WILL PROVE PRACTICABLE.

*Aggravate
host
underlying*

- AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND (AND DESPITE A CONTINUING INTEREST IN THE OSCE'S POTENTIAL AS A COUNTERWEIGHT TO NATO), THERE WILL PROBABLY BE LITTLE INTEREST HERE IN PRESSING AHEAD WITH AN OSCE CHARTER - THE RUSSIANS RECOGNISE THAT IN VIEW OF FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES ON EUROPEAN SECURITY IT COULD BE LITTLE MORE THAN A REHEARSAL OF PLATITUDES. MOSCOW IS LIKELY TO FOCUS ON MORE CONCRETE ISSUES, SUCH AS CFE ADAPTATION (ALTHOUGH RUSSIAN NEGOTIATORS WILL BE INFLUENCED BY AN AWARENESS THAT THAT THE CLIMATE FOR RATIFYING AN ADAPTED TREATY IS LIKELY TO BE MORE HOSTILE).

- THERE ARE SIGNS THAT RUSSIA MAY BE INTERESTED IN RESUSCITATING THE NATO/RUSSIA DIALOGUE IN SOME FORM, BUT AN EARLY RETURN TO THE STATUS QUO ANTE IS POLITICALLY IMPOSSIBLE. MORE ATTRACTIVE TO THE RUSSIANS IN THE SHORT TERM COULD BE TO USE THE PJC IN THE SPECIFIC CONTEXT OF THE KOSOVO DEPLOYMENT TO OBTAIN MORE VISIBLE INFLUENCE OVER NATO DECISION-MAKING, AND IN THE LONGER TERM TO EXPLORE THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE FOUNDING ACT CAN BE DEVELOPED IN THIS DIRECTION.

- THE RUSSIAN MILITARY HAVE STOOD OUT FOR THEIR VOCIFEROUS RHETORIC AND ACTIVE PROMOTION OF WHAT THEY PERCEIVE TO BE RUSSIAS INTERESTS AS A GREAT POWER. THE MOD HAS USED NATOS RESORT TO FORCE TO ARGUE THAT RUSSIAS NEW MILITARY DOCTRINE SHOULD TAKE MORE SERIOUS ACCOUNT OF A POTENTIAL THREAT FROM NATO, WITH ALL THAT THAT MEANS IN TERMS OF FORCE LEVELS, PROCUREMENT AND THE FUTURE OF ARMS CONTROL. MANY SENIOR GENERALS SEEM TO BE WORRYINGLY COMFORTABLE AS THEY LAPSE BACK INTO OLD STEREOTYPES. THE UKS FORWARD POSITION ON THE USE OF FORCE HAS NOT GONE UNNOTICED AND WILL HAMPER EFFORTS TO REINVIGORATE THE BILATERAL DEFENCE RELATIONSHIP. AS RUSSIA MOVES INTO A PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD, THE DUMA WILL BE IN NO MOOD TO CONSIDER ARMS CONTROL LEGISLATION SUCH AS START II, BUT THE CHRONIC SHORTAGE OF FUNDING AND THE LONG-TERM RUSSIAN INTEREST IN PROGRESS, AT LEAST ON STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTIONS, MAKE IT LIKELY THAT A MORE SOBER RECKONING WILL TAKE PLACE IN DUE COURSE.

*Not over
start*

4. WHILE MANY RUSSIAN LIBERALS AND DEMOCRATS ARGUED IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE BOMBING CAMPAIGN THAT NATO HAD SIGNIFICANTLY BOOSTED THE NATIONALISTS AND COMMUNISTS, IT IS BY NO MEANS CLEAR THAT THIS IS THE CASE. STRONG AND EMOTIONAL OPPOSITION TO NATO MILITARY

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ON, LIKE OPPOSITION TO NATO ENLARGEMENT, HAS BEEN A CONTINUING FEATURE OF RUSSIAN POLITICS RIGHT ACROSS THE SPECTRUM, MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR ANY ONE FACTION TO MAKE POLITICAL CAPITAL OUT OF IT. CLAIMS THAT NATOS ACTION UNDERMINED CONFIDENCE IN THE WEST AND THUS DISCREDITED WESTERN-LEANING LIBERALS HAVE BEEN OFFSET BY GREATER EXPOSURE TO THE EFFECTS OF MILOSEVICS CRIMES.

5. COLOGNE WILL BE AN IMPORTANT FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW MOSCOW THAT WE CONTINUE TO ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO WORKING WITH RUSSIA. IT WOULD HELP TO MITIGATE RUSSIAN CONCERNS ON THE POTENTIAL WIDER IMPACT OF NATO MILITARY ACTION IF THE PRIME MINISTER WERE ABLE TO MAKE THE POINT TO YELTSIN/STEPASHIN THAT HE AND YOU HAVE MADE SEPARATELY TO THE CHINESE, NAMELY THAT IT DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A PRECEDENT FOR INTERVENTION ELSEWHERE (YOUR TELNO 269 TO PEKING).

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PUS	RES CLERK	VCDS
CDS	DNO	DCMC (DUTY OFFICER)
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Tracing Detail

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 ACP127 Identifier RBDWDFA 8653 1681422
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