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SUBJ: Brezhnev Speech to Soviet Party Congress: Disarmament

REF : Baker-Goodby Telecon March 31

1. Following is our assessment based on excerpts available so far of disarmament portions of Brezhnev speech, which you may draw upon as appropriate in consultations with Allies. We will supply material for your use on other subjects covered in speech when available.

2. The disarmament portions of Brezhnev's keynote speech to the Soviet Party Congress March 30 projected an image of Soviet initiative in the field. None of the items he mentioned was entirely new, but two were particularly eye-catching -- a hint of Soviet interest in force reductions in Europe and a call for Chinese participation in nuclear disarmament.

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3. Brezhnev spoke approvingly of the goals of the strategic arms limitation talks with the US. He cautioned that such complex talks could not succeed unless the security interests of both sides were considered equally -- by implication a rebuke to the US for not really doing so. His treatment of SALT was brief, and Brezhnev was careful to respect the privacy of the talks.

4. Brezhnev had nothing new to say about the reiterated Soviet call for a CES. His mention of Soviet willingness to abolish the Warsaw Pact was, of course, old hat. The Pact's duration clause provides for it to lapse upon conclusion of a general

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European security treaty, and the wrinkle about abolition of the NATO and Pact military organizations as a first stage dates from the Bucharest summit meeting of 1966.

5. What was unusual was Brezhnev's reference to the desirability of reducing armed forces and armaments in areas of confrontation, especially in Central Europe. Since the June 22, 1970 Warsaw Pact Foreign Ministers' communique (which indicated that reductions of foreign forces in Europe might be discussed by an organ to be established at the European security conference or in some other mutually agreed forum), there had been no major Soviet or Pact policy statement on the subject. Brezhnev's indication of Soviet interest in force reductions, and his use this time of a formulation which is not necessarily limited to foreign troops, seem calculated to convey a hint of Soviet flexibility to West Europeans.

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6. In reviving the idea of a five-power nuclear disarmament conference, Brezhnev returned to an idea which the Soviets have played with on and off, for some time. It first had currency after the initial Chinese nuclear weapon test occurred, just after Khrushchev's ouster, in a period when the Soviets sought to tone down their strident polemics with Peking. It was also a period of Soviet wooing of de Gaulle, and the notion served to make a point of Soviet respect for France as a nuclear power. The reiteration of the ideas of prohibiting nuclear weapons and of a world disarmament conference also seems to be a Soviet effort to favor what were once Peking's proposals in the disarmament field. Brezhnev's treatment of disarmament themes thus appeared to be in keeping with his treatment of normalization of state relations with Peking earlier in his speech. But, as has so often been the case, such an olive branch

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to Peking seems to have its own polemical purpose. Breshnev was by implication highlighting Chinese recalcitrance on disarmament issues.

7. Brezhnev's other disarmament items seemed to add to the bulk of the package and to underscore the theme of Soviet initiative in the disarmament field:

-- the separability of biological warfare from chemical warfare as a possible topic for agreement at Geneva was indicated by the use of the plural "treaties" in a sentence listing them, but Brezhnev did not make a point of the shift in the Soviet position in recent days.

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-- Brezhnev indicated a willingness to extend the idea of non-use-of-force agreements to other countries, either bilaterally or on a regional basis. He did not elaborate on what countries might be candidates for such agreements.

-- Brezhnev advocated a comprehensive test ban and agreement on military budgets, but added nothing to earlier Soviet proposals on either topic. END.

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