

174M-REAGAN-SOVIET 2 MOSCOW

LAST MONTH ANDROPOV WAS QUOTED AS SAYING TO A U.S. JOURNALIST THAT HE WOULD WELCOME A SUMMIT MEETING WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN IF PROPER PREPARATIONS WERE MADE.

THE PRAVDA EDITORIAL CONTRASTED SHARPLY WITH THE TONE OF A SIMILAR STATEMENT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR WHICH ACCUSED THE UNITED STATES OF PURSUING AN "UNCONSTRUCTIVE AND SELFISH STAND" AT STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TREATY TALKS IN GENEVA.

THE ARTICLE CARRIED TODAY BY TASS UNDERLINING ITS STATUS AS A KREMLIN POLICY STATEMENT QUOTED REAGAN AS EXPRESSING HOPE FOR IMPROVED U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS AND GENUINE STABILITY.

IT ALSO QUOTED HIM AS SAYING WASHINGTON DID NOT "INSIST THAT THE SOVIET UNION ABANDON ITS STANDING AS A SUPERPOWER OR ITS LEGITIMATE NATIONAL INTERESTS."

"NO DENYING IT; THESE ARE REASONABLE VIEWS," PRAVDA SAID.

BUT THE NEWSPAPER THEN WENT ON TO CATALOGUE IN COMPARATIVELY RESTRAINED LANGUAGE THE RANGE OF ISSUES WHICH DIVIDE THE TWO COUNTRIES; INCLUDING ARMS QUESTIONS; AFGHANISTAN; THE MIDDLE EAST AND POLAND.

THE PRAVDA EDITORIAL SAID THE SOVIET UNION HAD PUT FORWARD "A REALISTIC PROGRAM OF CONCRETE MEASURES THAT LEAD TO AN ENDING OF THE ARMS RACE."

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IT ADDED: "WHAT IS REQUIRED OF THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION IS ONLY TO GIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVES; INCLUDING THOSE CONDUCTING NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA; TO DISCUSS SERIOUSLY THE U.S.S.R.'S PROPOSALS AND TO SEARCH FOR AN ACCORD JOINTLY WITH THE SOVIET SIDE."

REAGAN HAS REJECTED AN OFFER BY THE KREMLIN TO CUT ITS ARSENAL OF MEDIUM-RANGE MISSILES IN EUROPE TO THE COMBINED LEVEL OF BRITAIN AND FRANCE AND LAST WEEK HE RESPONDED CAUTIOUSLY TO A HANSA PACT PROPOSAL FOR A NON-AGGRESSION TREATY WITH NATO.

ON SATURDAY REAGAN SPOKE OPTIMISTICALLY ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR AN AGREEMENT IN STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTION TREATY TALKS (START) WITH MOSCOW; SAYING THAT "CLEARLY; THE SOVIETS WANT TO BE MORE RESPONSIBLE AND REASONABLE."

TODAY'S KREMLIN STATEMENT APPEARED TO RECIPROCATE THIS.

IT SAID REAGAN'S PRONOUNCEMENT ABOUT U.S. READINESS TO DISCUSS PRACTICAL MEASURES WHICH CAN LEAD TO A GENUINE IMPROVEMENT OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS CAN ONLY BE WELCOMED.

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