

GRS 1070  
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TO PRIORITY FCO

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INFO PRIORITY LUXEMBOURG (FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY)

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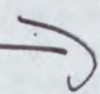
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M MITTERRAND AND HIS GOVERNMENT

1. THE PRIME MINISTER AND YOU YOURSELF WILL SEE M MITTERRAND AT THE MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL IN A WEEK'S TIME. IT MAY BE HELPFUL IF I MAKE A GENERAL COMMENT ON M MITTERRAND'S FRANCE FOLLOWING HIS GREAT ELECTION VICTORY.

2. PERHAPS I SHOULD FIRST COMMENT ON THE IDEA WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE GAINED SOME CURRENCY IN BOTH BRITAIN AND FRANCE (PUT ABOUT IN THE LATTER BY SYMPATHISERS OF THE FORMER REGIME) THAT M MITTERRAND'S GOVERNMENT WILL BE AN EASIER PARTNER FOR THE UK THAN M GISCARD'S WAS. I AM NOT CONFIDENT THAT THIS WILL BE THE CASE. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT FRANCE IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO BE A DIFFICULT PARTNER, BUT DIFFICULT IN A DIFFERENT WAY. M GISCARD'S FRANCE WAS EFFICIENT, WELL ADMINISTERED AND GROWING STEADILY IN STRENGTH, BUT IT CARRIED NATIONAL SELF-ASSERTION TO EXCESS; TIRESEMELY CLASSIFIED FOREIGN COUNTRIES AS PRIVILEGED PARTNERS, RIVALS OR OF NO ACCOUNT, AND TENDED TO PUT BRITAIN, DEPENDING ON THE OCCASION, INTO ONE OR OTHER OF THE TWO LAST CATEGORIES. M MITTERRAND'S FRANCE IS NOT LIKELY TO HAVE THE SAME DELIBERATE EDGE AGAINST BRITAIN, BUT IT WILL PROBABLY BE A LESS ORDERLY FRANCE, CREATING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FOR ITSELF AND OTHERS, AND LESS ABLE TO AFFORD TO BE HELPFUL EVEN WHEN IT MIGHT BE INCLINED TO BE SO.

3. THERE IS LIKELY TO BE A VIVID ILLUSTRATION OF M MITTERRAND'S WAY OF DOING THINGS OVER THE QUESTION OF PARTICIPATION BY COMMUNIST MINISTERS IN THE GOVERNMENT (I COMMENTED ON THIS IN MY TEL NO 535). MY EXPECTATION IS THAT THERE WILL INDEED BE COMMUNIST MINISTERS IN THE GOVERNMENT LARGELY BECAUSE THIS IS IN THE CONTINUING LOGIC OF THE LINE WHICH M MITTERRAND HAS FOLLOWED THROUGHOUT THE PAST DECADE, WHICH HAS ENABLED HIM NOW TO CAPTURE SO TRIUMPHANTLY A CLIENTELE WHICH THE COMMUNIST PARTY REGARDED AS ITS OWN. THE POINT IS THAT M MITTERRAND HAS MATURED HIS OWN POLITICAL ATTITUDE VERY MUCH IN SOLITUDE IN THE WILDERNESS AND HE IS NOT GOING TO BE EASILY, IF AT ALL, DISTRACTED FROM WHAT HE SEES AS THE RIGHT POLICIES FOR FRANCE. HE IS NOT A STRIDENT MAN. IF ANYTHING HIS STYLE THESE DAYS IS DECEPTIVELY QUIET. UNDERNEATH THERE IS A KERNEL OF IDEALISM OR AT ANY RATE ROMANTICISM, A POWERFUL WILL AND A REMARKABLE TENACITY OF PURPOSE. THE PRESENT



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SOCIALIST PARTY HAS BEEN BUILT UP BY HIM AND HE IS IN EVERY SENSE A SELF-MADE PRESIDENT. HIS PURPOSE WILL NOW BE TO MAINTAIN THE SOCIALIST PARTY AS THE DOMINANT POLITICAL FORCE IN FRANCE. THIS IMPLIES THE DELIBERATE, THOUGH MEASURED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLES ROUND WHICH THE PARTY HAS BEEN FORMED.

4. FOR A FIRST PERIOD M MITTERRAND AND HIS COLLEAGUES WILL BE MUCH TAKEN UP WITH DOMESTIC PREOCCUPATIONS. ONE OF THEIR EARLIER MEASURES WILL BE A VERY FAR REACHING DECENTRALISATION OF THE FRENCH ADMINISTRATION, WEAKENING THE PREFECTORIAL STRUCTURE AND INCREASING THE POWER OF THE CONSEILS GENERAUX IN THE DEPARTMENTS AND REGIONS. AGAINST THAT BACKGROUND THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE AS ITS OBJECTIVES THE FIGHT AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT, THE IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN FRANCE AND THE DEFENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN AND OUTSIDE FRANCE. PRIME MINISTER MAUROY, THE FINANCE MINISTER AND OTHERS REPEAT FAIRLY FREQUENTLY IN THEIR SPEECHES THAT THE FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION IS GOING TO BE MAINTAINED, BUT THE POLICIES TO WHICH THE PRESIDENT AND HIS GOVERNMENT ARE COMMITTED ARE POLICIES OF REFLATION. IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESCAPE THE CONCLUSION THAT BY THE WINTER M MITTERRAND'S FRANCE WILL BE AT GRIPS WITH A WHOLE NUMBER OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROBLEMS CREATED BY THEIR OWN DETERMINATION TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE, AND THAT THIS WILL LEAVE THEM RELATIVELY LITTLE TIME FOR GENUINE CONSTRUCTIVENESS IN EXTERNAL MATTERS.

5. M MITTERRAND IS NOW IN A VERY POWERFUL POSITION AND HE UNDOUBTEDLY WISHES TO BE SEEN BY HISTORY AS THE CHAMPION OF A MODERN FRANCE. IRONICALLY FOR HIM HE HAS TO TAKE ON STRAIGHT AWAY THE WINDMILLS OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS. IF HE IS NOT TO APPEAR IN TWO OR THREE YEARS TIME AS A SOMEWHAT SORRY, QUIXOTIC FIGURE, HE WILL NEED TO RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO USE HIS HEAVY MAJORITY TO BRING IN SOCIALISM QUICKLY. THE INTEREST IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AND MONTHS WILL LIE IN WATCHING THE WAY IN WHICH HE INTERPRETS HIS FIRM COMMITMENT TO FULFIL ALL THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH HE HAS UNDERTAKEN IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN (MY SAVING TEL NO 86). THE SECRET WILL PRESUMABLY LIE IN TIMING. LAST NIGHT M MAUROY CLAIMED THAT THIS SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT DIFFERS FROM PREDECESSORS IN THAT IT HAS TIME TO PLAY WITH (THANKS TO ITS MAJORITY). BUT IT IS TOO EARLY AT THE MOMENT TO PREDICT WHETHER M MITTERRAND'S TIMING WILL BE AS SUBTLE AS THE SITUATION DEMANDS. THE PRESSURE OF EVENTS IS ALREADY TAKING HOLD OF HIM, AS I THINK MY TELEGRAM NUMBER 535 SHOWS.

6. ALL FRANCE'S PARTNERS ARE NOW FAMILIAR WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S PLEA THAT NEARLY ALL THE DIFFICULT ISSUES WHICH WERE PRESSING IN ON FRANCE SHOULD BE SUSPENDED FOR TWO OR THREE MONTHS WHILE THE NEW GOVERNMENT TAKES STOCK. I CANNOT TELL FROM HERE WHETHER THIS PLEA IS RECEIVED ABROAD WITH SYMPATHY OR SCEPTICISM. PERSONALLY I AM INCLINED TO BE A BIT SCEPTICAL ABOUT IT. IT HAS BEEN NOTED THAT THERE IS NO SIGN OF A PAUSE TO TAKE STOCK AS

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REGARDS THE VERY FAR-REACHING CHANGES WHICH M MITTERRAND THE THE SOCIALIST PARTY INTEND TO INTRODUCE INSIDE FRANCE. THERE ARE SOME SIGNS THAT AT THE END OF THE STOCK-TAKING PERIOD FRANCE WILL COME UP WITH ARGUMENTS WHICH BY NO MEANS FACILITATE THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE BEEN PUT IN SUSPENSE. IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT M MITTERRAND IS GOING TO DEVELOP A LINE WHICH CALLS ON ALL FRANCE'S PARTNERS, AND PARTICULARLY HER EUROPEAN PARTNERS, TO TAKE THEIR INSPIRATION FROM M MITTERRAND AND HIS FRANCE, TO GIVE PRIORITY TO THE THIRD WORLD AND TO JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT, THE EXTENSION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE DEFENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE COROLLARY OF THIS COULD BE THAT THOSE PARTNERS WHO FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW DOWN THIS ROAD WOULD BE TOLD THAT, IF THEY CANNOT MOVE TOWARDS FRANCE, FRANCE WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO MOVE TOWARDS THEM ON VARIOUS MATTERS, INCLUDING THOSE WHICH HAVE BEEN HELD IN SUSPENSE. M MITTERRAND WOULD THEN HAVE PROVIDED HIMSELF WITH AN ALL-PURPOSE ALIBI, USEFUL EITHER EXTERNALLY OR INTERNALLY. THERE ARE DANGERS IN OVER-SIMPLIFYING THIS ARGUMENT, BECAUSE M MITTERRAND'S FRANCE IS LIKELY SOON TO NEED HELP AND SYMPATHY FROM OTHERS, BUT MY CONCERN IN THIS TELEGRAM HAS BEEN TO SKETCH IN BROAD STROKES THE SOCIALIST FRANCE FOR WHICH M MITTERRAND WILL BE SPEAKING IN LUXEMBOURG NEXT WEEK.

FCO PLEASE PASS SAVINGS TO ALL

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THIS TELEGRAM  
WAS NOT  
ADVANCED

[REPEATED AS  
REQUESTED]

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