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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 50 OF 19 JANUARY

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ANGLO/GERMAN CONSULTATIONS 18 JANUARY

SUMMARY

1. AN ESPECIALLY HARMONIOUS SUMMIT, WHICH GOT A GOOD PRESS HERE. IT DEMONSTRATED THE GROWING WARMTH IN UK/FRG RELATIONS.

DETAIL

2. I FOUND THE ATMOSPHERE AT YESTERDAY'S SUMMIT EXCEPTIONALLY CORDIAL. IT SHOWED HOW NATURALLY BRITISH AND GERMAN MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS CAN COMMUNICATE. KOHL'S PHRASE ABOUT THIS SUMMIT BEING A KIND OF JOINT CABINET MEETING WAS MEANT SERIOUSLY. HIS WARMHEARTEDNESS, HIS FREQUENT REFERENCES TO THE NEED FOR HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE IN POLITICS AND HIS AVOIDANCE OF DETAIL IN DISCUSSION WERE ALL TYPICAL OF THE CHANCELLOR. THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS ABOUT THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF 1984 AND THE SOUND BASIS THEY PROVIDE FOR DEALING WITH THE DECISIONS OF 1985 WILL HAVE GONE DOWN WELL WITH KOHL AND HIS COLLEAGUES.

3. USEFUL WORK WAS DONE ON A NUMBER OF CONCRETE MATTERS: FOR INSTANCE THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY: SDI, WHERE THE PRIME MINISTER'S DISTINCTION BETWEEN RESEARCH AND DEPLOYMENT IS WARMLY ENDORSED BY THE GERMANS: NATO CONVENTIONAL DEFENCE: ASPECTS OF DEFENCE EQUIPMENT COLLABORATION: AND THE VERY TOPICAL ISSUE OF VEHICLE EMISSIONS, WHERE THERE WERE THE FIRST SIGNS OF SOME GIVE IN THE GERMAN POSITION, ALTHOUGH MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE BEFORE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS ARE CLEAR. YOUR OWN DISCUSSION WITH GENSCHER ABOUT THE COMMUNITY WAS THOROUGH AND FRIENDLY, BUT THE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION ABOUT THE TIMING OF NEW OWN RESOURCES REMAINS A HARD NUT TO CRACK.

4. KOHL'S INTERVIEW IN THE TIMES OF 18 JANUARY PROVIDED A GOOD PUBLIC BACKGROUND FOR THE SUMMIT. IT SEEMED TO ME THAT HE WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO SHOW THAT HE ATTACHES IMPORTANCE TO BRITAIN, AND NOT ONLY TO OUR DEFENCE CONTRIBUTION. ON EUROPE, HE WAS OBVIOUSLY TRYING TO SAY THINGS THAT WE SHOULD NOT WANT TO DISSENT FROM. HIS STATEMENT THAT 'IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO MOVE EUROPE FORWARDS WITHOUT GREAT BRITAIN PLAYING A SUBSTANTIAL POLITICAL ROLE' IMPLICITLY RETRACTS KOHL'S EARLIER EXPRESSION OF WILLINGNESS TO SEE A TWO-SPEED EUROPE IN WHICH THE ORIGINAL SIX WOULD MOVE THE FASTEST. HE REPEATED HIS SUGGESTION OF A NEW TREATY, BUT ONLY AS AN IDEA WHICH THE COMMUNITY SHOULD 'SERIOUSLY CONSIDER': AND AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER THE SUMMIT HE TURNED ASIDE A QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER THIS PROPOSAL HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AND HOW THE PRIME MINISTER HAD REACTED TO IT, SAYING THAT THE TIME FOR SUCH DISCUSSION WOULD BE AFTER THE DOOGIE COMMITTEE HAD REPORTED.

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5. YESTERDAY'S GERMAN PRESS CARRIED AN UNUSUAL NUMBER OF CURTAIN-RAISING ARTICLES FROM CORRESPONDENTS IN LONDON, REFLECTING THE VERY FULL BRIEFING THERE. THERE WAS GOOD TELEVISION COVERAGE. TODAY'S PRESS HAS MANY PROMINENT REPORTS, MOSTLY AS SECOND LEAD STORIES. THEY NOTE THE HIGH LEVEL OF AGREEMENT AND THE PARTICULAR WARMTH OF THIS SUMMIT. THE PRIME MINISTER'S AND KOHL'S REMARKS ABOUT THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY RECEIVE TOP BILLING: "SYMBOL OF HOPE" (FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE), "UNITY WITH LONDON ON 8 MAY" (SUD-DEUTSCHE ZEITUNG), "A DAY OF FREEDOM" (DIE WELT). SEVERAL PAPERS SAY THERE ARE CONTINUING DIFFERENCES REGARDING THE CONCEPT OF EUROPEAN UNITY AND NOTE THE PLANNED MEETING AT CHEQUERS. THE DIFFERENCE ABOUT THE DATE FOR NEW OWN RESOURCES IS ALSO MENTIONED. DIE WELT HAS AN EXTREMELY POSITIVE ARTICLE ABOUT THE PRIME MINISTER (TRANSLATION BY BAG). IT ATTRIBUTES TO MRS THATCHER "A PRAGMATISM WHICH BORDERS ON VISION" AND "A REALISM WHICH CAN CLAIM TO BE AKIN TO IDEALISM". IT PRAISES HER PARTICULARLY FOR FORCING THE COMMUNITY TO RECOGNISE THE ABNORMALITIES OF THE BUDGET AND FOR SETTING NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS DOMESTICALLY IN BRITAIN.

[Wow!]

6. THIS SUMMIT CONFIRMED MY FEELING OF GROWING WARMTH IN ANGLO/GERMAN RELATIONS. ONE REASON IS THE SETTLEMENT OF THE EC BUDGET ISSUE AND THE CONVERGENCE OF THINKING IN THE 2 COUNTRIES ABOUT THE FUTURE OF EUROPE. ANOTHER IS THE INCREASING RECOGNITION HERE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR MANIFOLD RELATIONSHIP. RECENT SUCCESSSES IN BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY, SUCH AS HONG KONG AND THE GORBACHEV VISIT, HAVE ALSO HELPED. THERE ARE GOOD PROSPECTS OF MAINTAINING THE IMPROVED ATMOSPHERE, PROVIDED OUR DIFFERENCES ARE CAREFULLY HANDLED. THIS TIME THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY PROVIDED A TOPICAL SUBJECT FOR THE MEDIA TO LATCH ON TO, AND THIS HAS HELPED THE PUBLIC IMPACT. I HOPE THAT NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN BILATERAL RELATIONS MAY SOMETIMES PROVIDE THE PUBLIC KEY-NOTE AT FUTURE SUMMITS AND THAT THE NEWLY APPOINTED COORDINATORS OF BILATERAL RELATIONS MAY PRODUCE SUITABLE IDEAS. BUT CLEARLY THE SPECIAL SPRING MEETING AT CHEQUERS, PROPOSED BY KOHL AND ENVISAGED BY HIM AS A CHANCE TO TALK IN DEPTH ABOUT THE FUTURE OF EUROPE, WILL BE BOTH MORE IMPORTANT AND MORE DIFFICULT THAN THIS ONE IN BONN.

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