

Germany

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 945 OF 05 NOVEMBER

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UKREP BRUSSELS CICC(G) CONSULATES-GENERAL IN THE FRG

FDP PARTY CONFERENCE: 5-7 NOVEMBER

1. THE PARTY CONFERENCE IN BERLIN THIS WEEKEND WILL BE OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE FOR THE FDP'S FUTURE. UNLESS THEY CAN SETTLE THEIR INTERNAL DIFFERENCES AND PUT ON A CONVINCING SHOW OF UNITY BEHIND GENSCHER AS PARTY CHAIRMAN, THEY WILL STAND LITTLE CHANCE OF CLEARING THE 5 PERCENT HURDLE IN THE FEDERAL ELECTIONS NEXT MARCH AND OF REMAINING IN THE BUNDESTAG (AND THE GOVERNMENT) THEREAFTER.

2. THE MAIN ISSUE IN BERLIN WILL BE WHETHER GENSCHER SECURES RE-ELECTION AS PARTY CHAIRMAN. THIS IS NO FOREGONE CONCLUSION. GENSCHER HAS BEEN STRONGLY CRITICISED WITHIN THE FDP FOR SWITCHING COALITION PARTNERS WITHOUT FULLY CONSULTING HIS PARTY AND BLAMED FOR THE SUBSEQUENT COLLAPSE IN THE FDP VOTE. 7 (OUT OF 11) FDP LAND PARTIES HAVE NOW CALLED FOR HIS RESIGNATION. RONNEBURGER, THE ONLY OTHER CANDIDATE, CARRIES LITTLE CONVICTION, AND GENSCHER IS STILL EXPECTED TO BE RE-ELECTED. BUT EVEN FDP PARTY HEADQUARTERS DOUBT IF HE WILL POLL MORE THAN 55 PERCENT OF THE VOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE RESULT MAY DEPEND ON THE COURSE OF THE DEBATE.

3. THERE IS ALSO THE PROSPECT OF AN AWKWARD POLICY CLASH BETWEEN GENSCHER AND HIS LEFT-WING OPPONENTS. THE LATTER WILL BE TABLING AN ALTERNATIVE MANIFESTO IN BERLIN WHICH DIFFERS FROM THE POLICIES OF GENSCHER AND THE FDP LEADERSHIP IN SEVERAL KEY AREAS, INCLUDING INF. THEY WANT INF DEPLOYMENT, IF IT PROVES UNAVOIDABLE, TO BE SEA-BASED. LAST YEAR AN FDP MOTION IN FAVOUR OF SEA-BASING RECEIVED 40 PERCENT SUPPORT, EVEN THOUGH GENSCHER THREATENED TO RESIGN IF IT WERE CARRIED. IN BERLIN, THE LEFT ARE CLEARLY HOPING TO DEFEAT HIM ON WHAT HE MADE A RESIGNATION ISSUE. THE VOTE COULD BE CLOSE.

4. FDP EMOTIONS ARE THEREFORE RUNNING HIGH. ALTHOUGH THE LEFT-WING ARE NO LONGER TALKING SERIOUSLY ABOUT SPLITTING THE PARTY IF GENSCHER IS RE-ELECTED, IT IS HARD TO SEE THEM ACCEPTING DEFEAT WITH GOOD GRACE, OR THE PARTY AS A WHOLE EMERGING REUNITED AND STRENGTHENED FROM THE COMING WEEKEND.

FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING ADDRESSEES EXCEPT CICC(G) AND CONSULATES-GENERAL IN THE FRG.

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

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