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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

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INFO IMMEDIATE BONN

INFO ROUTINE UKDEL NATO, ROME, WASHINGTON, UKREP BRUSSELS

MY TELNO 1128 : KOHL/MITTERRAND MEETING

SUMMARY

1. FOCUS, AS EXPECTED, ON DEFENCE COOPERATION WITH PERSPECT OF DISCUSSION OF USE OF FRENCH TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS. NEW BILATERAL WORKING GROUP IS SET UP ON SPACE. IN THE ABSENCE OF SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC RESULTS, THE PRESS AGAIN UNDERLINES THE 'EMPTINESS' OF PRESENT FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS, HOWEVER MUCH EACH SIDE MAY EMPHASISE THAT POLITICAL WILL REMAINS CONSTANT.

DETAIL

2. KOHL AND MITTERRAND MET YESTERDAY AFTERNOON FOR AN HOUR AND HALF WITH ONLY ATTALI AND TELTSCHIK PRESENT. GENERALS ALTENBURG AND SAULNIER MET SEPARATELY, THEN JOINED THE TWO PRINCIPALS FOR DINNER. KOHL AND MITTERRAND TOLD THE PRESS AFTERWARDS THAT THEY HAD A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC ISSUES WITHOUT GOING INTO DETAILS. THEY AGREED TO GIVE A NEW IMPETUS TO THE MILITARY PROVISIONS OF THE ELYSEE TREATY AND IN PARTICULAR TO INCREASE THE EXCHANGES OF PERSONNEL BETWEEN THEIR ARMED FORCES, PARTICULARLY FOR SENIOR OFFICER TRAINING. THE QUESTION OF GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN HERMES REMAINED OPEN.

3. THE GERMAN EMBASSY HERE HAVE CONFIRMED TO US THAT MOST OF THE TIME WAS DEVOTED TO A GENERAL REVIEW OF DEFENCE COOPERATION, BASED ON THE WORK OF THE THREE BILATERAL WORKING GROUPS (ARMS COOPERATION, STRATEGIC QUESTIONS, MILITARY TACTICAL COOPERATION), WHO HAVE BEEN MEETING SINCE 1983 UNDER THE ELYSEE TREATY. KOHL TOLD THE FRG AMBASSADOR THAT HE HAD BEEN PLEASED THAT MITTERRAND HAD AGREED THAT THE STRATEGIC QUESTIONS GROUP SHOULD CONSIDER MATTERS RELATING TO THE USE OF FRENCH NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN GERMANY (PLUTON AND THE FUTURE HADES MISSILES, BUT NOT THOSE ON THE PLATEAU D'ALBION OR THE STRATEGIC DETERRENT). KOHL WANTED TO ACHIEVE THE SAME LEVEL OF COORDINATION ON THESE QUESTIONS WITH FRANCE AS CURRENTLY WITH OURSELVES AND THE US. THE FRG AMBASSADOR UNDERSTANDS THAT THE GROUP WOULD ALSO EXAMINE POSSIBLE FRENCH FORWARD DEPLOYMENT IN GERMANY.

4. MY GERMAN COLLEAGUE TOLD ME THAT ON SDI KOHL HAD EXPLAINED THE DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY THE GERMAN CABINET THIS MORNING. THE FRENCH REFERRED TO THE GREAT DIFFICULTY OF EXPLAINING TO THE FRENCH PEOPLE THAT THEIR IMMENSE EFFORT TO CREATE A NUCLEAR DETERRENT MIGHT BE OVERTAKEN BY NEW TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS, AND WARNED AGAINST MOVING INTO A PERIOD OF STRATEGIC INSTABILITY. THE GERMANS HAD REPLIED THAT ONE COULD NOT STOP TECHNICAL PROGRESS AND THAT THE PERIOD OF INSTABILITY WAS ALREADY HERE, DUE IN LARGE PART TO SOVIET WORK ON BALLISTIC

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BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENCE. THERE WAS NO MEETING OF MINDS, BUT THE GERMANS HAVE REASSURED THEMSELVES THAT LIKELY ALTERNATIVE PRIME MINISTERS FOLLOWING THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS WILL TAKE A LESS NEGATIVE APPROACH TO THE AMERICAN SDI. THEY THEREFORE REGARD THIS AS A SHORT-TERM PROBLEM IN FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS.

5. KOHL HAD REITERATED THAT THERE WAS NO MONEY FOR HERMES IN 1986. THE GERMANS WOULD LOOK AT IT AGAIN IN 1987. A FOURTH BILATERAL GROUP WOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO DISCUSS SPACE.

6. ONE OTHER FEATURE, ACCORDING TO MY GERMAN COLLEAGUE, WAS AN INDICATION BY MITTERRAND THAT THE FRENCH WOULD BECOME LESS DOGMATIC ABOUT STANDING ON THEIR RIGHTS AS AN OCCUPYING POWER IN BERLIN AND WOULD MOVE CLOSER TO THE BRITISH AND US POSITION IN ACKNOWLEDGING THAT BERLIN EXISTS ALSO BY VIRTUE OF ITS LINKS WITH THE FRG.

7. WE ARE PROMISED A READOUT FROM THE ELYSEE TOMORROW MORNING.

8. PROTESTATIONS BY BOTH KOHL AND MITTERRAND THAT THEIR RELATIONS WERE BASICALLY GOOD, HAVE NOT STOPPED THE PRESS FROM PRESENTING THE MEETING AS ANOTHER IN A SERIES OF FAILURES TO RELAUNCH FRANCO-GERMAN COOPERATION ON A SOLID BASIS. LIBERATION (LEFT-WING) SAYS THAT KOHL WISHES TO BE THE MOST FAITHFUL ALLY OF THE US. IT IS MORE REALISTIC AND RELIABLE FOR THE FRG TODAY TO BASE ITS SECURITY ON THE AMERICANS, WHEREAS THE STRATEGIC POSITIONS OF FRANCE AND GERMANY ARE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO RECONCILE. FRANCOIS-PONCET IN FIGARO SAYS THAT PARIS AND BONN DISAGREE ON THE MAIN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS - STAR WARS, GATT, AGRICULTURAL POLICY, EUROPEAN MONEY. IN FIVE YEARS, EXCEPT WHAT HOPES EXIST FOR HERMES, NO MAJOR COMMON INITIATIVE HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT EFFECTIVELY. FRANCOIS-PONCET ATTRIBUTES THIS ESSENTIALLY TO THE RELATIVE DECLINE OF THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STRENGTH OF FRANCE UNDER THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT: THE SUBJECT OF FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS IS THUS OPENED UP AS A POSSIBLE ELECTION ISSUE. ALTHOUGH MITTERRAND CLAIMED THAT SDI WAS NOT DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING, THE PRESS GENERALLY SEES THE EXPECTED GERMAN DECISION AS A VOTE IN FAVOUR OF STRATEGIC COOPERATION WITH THE US AND AGAINST EUREKA. A CONTRAST IS MADE BETWEEN THIS DECISION AND AN INTERVIEW WITH QUILES YESTERDAY, WHICH INCLUDES A FULL RESTATEMENT OF FRENCH OBJECTIONS TO SDI (COPIES BY BAG). LE MONDE'S EDITORIAL TODAY HOWEVER, WHILE AGREEING THAT DIFFERENCES OVER SPACE HAVE ADDED TO FRANCO-GERMAN DIFFERENCES, RECALLS THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CAMP DAVID FOUR-POINTS TO SHOW THAT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES HAVE SIMILAR RESERVATIONS ON THE STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF SDI: AND POINTS OUT THAT GERMANY HESITATED A LONG TIME BEFORE SEEKING AN AGREEMENT ON PARTICIPATION, WHILE FRENCH FIRMS ARE AS KEEN AS ANY TO WIN SDI CONTRACTS.

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