

GRS 580

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FM BONN 071315Z MAY 85

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 457 OF 07 MAY

INFO ROUTINE WASHINGTON, PARIS, ROME, TOKYO, OTTAWA, UKREP BRUSSELS,  
UKDEL OECD, ATHENS, EMBASSY BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN, DUBLIN,  
LUXEMBOURG, THE HAGUE

BONN ECONOMIC SUMMIT: GERMAN PRESS REACTION

SUMMARY

1. THE GERMAN PRESS FINDS SOME GOOD IN THE SUMMIT CONCLUSIONS BUT, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, FINDS THE BALANCE DISAPPOINTING. FRENCH RESISTANCE OVER A DATE FOR A NEW GATT ROUND AND AND ON EUROPEAN PARTICIPATION IN SDI ARE HIGHLIGHTED. BUT MITTERRAND DOES NOT GET THE BLAME: HE HAD HIS REASONS AND CHANCELLOR KOHL SHOULD HAVE REALISED THIS IN ADVANCE. QUESTIONS ARE POSED ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP. REAGAN DID NOT GET MUCH TO SATISFY HIM. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NICARAGUA EMBARGO WAS NOT A TACTFUL MOVE. ONLY THE JAPANESE CAN BE HAPPY THAT LITTLE ATTENTION WAS SPARED FOR THEIR ECONOMIC POLICIES.

DETAIL

2. THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE (STADLMANN) SUMS IT UP AS A CONFERENCE OF DISAPPOINTMENTS. THE AGREEMENT ON ECONOMIC STRATEGY WAS VALUABLE AS WAS THE COVERAGE OF RELATIONS WITH THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, THE DEBT PROBLEM, COOPERATION IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS. BUT IT WOULD BE WRONG TO PLAY DOWN THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DISAGREEMENT OVER A NEW GATT ROUND. THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT MITTERRAND FELT LET DOWN BY KOHL'S READINESS TO MOVE TOWARDS THE AMERICAN POSITION. HERE, AND IN HIS FIRM REJECTION OF SDI, MITTERRAND OPENLY USED ARGUMENTS OF EUROPEAN INTEREST. THE RESULT WAS NOT ONLY AWKWARD FOR KOHL BUT LEFT THE FOUR EUROPEAN PARTICIPANTS IN DISHARMONY. WHILE MRS THATCHER FIRMLY SUPPORTED PRESIDENT REAGAN, BOTH AS REGARDS SDI RESEARCH AND AN EARLY START TO A NEW TRADE ROUND, CRAXI FELL INTO LINE BEHIND MITTERRAND LEAVING KOHL IN A POSITION UNCOMFORTABLY LIKE THAT OF THE 1950S WITH BONN HAVING TO DECIDE BETWEEN THE COMPETING CLAIMS OF PARIS AND WASHINGTON. NO COMMUNIQUE DRAFTING COULD HIDE THESE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES.

3. THE GENERAL ANZEIGER (BELL), BEGINS WITH THE POSITIVE, NO DOUBT REFLECTING OFFICIAL BRIEFING, BUT SUGGESTS THAT PART OF THE PROBLEM WAS THAT WITH BOTH REAGAN AND NAKASONE VISITS LOADED ON TO THE SUMMIT WHICH IN TURN WAS DELIBERATELY SET CLOSE TO THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY TO VE DAY, KOHL TOOK ON TOO MUCH AND THAT THINGS WERE BOUND TO GO WRONG.

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14



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4. THE SUEDEDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG FINDS LITTLE COMFORT IN THE SUMMIT. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PARTICIPANTS WERE SERIOUS. DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN BONN AND PARIS HAD SPRUNG UP ALMOST OVERNIGHT. KOHL BADLY MISREAD THE SIGNALS OUT OF PARIS BOTH ON WORLD TRADE AND SDI AND ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE FAR TOO OPTIMISTIC IN ADVANCE OF THE SUMMIT. MUCH MORE PATIENCE, CARE AND SKILL WERE NEEDED FROM THE CHANCELLOR TO SWEEP AWAY THE BROKEN CROCKERY IN THE AMERICAN/GERMAN RELATIONSHIP.

5. THE STUTTGARTER ZEITUNG SEES NOTHING TO ENCOURAGE THE UNEMPLOYED IN THE SUMIT'S CONCLUSIONS, A COMMENT ECHOED MORE FORCEFULLY BY THE FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU. FOR THE KOELNER STADT ANZEIGER IT WAS ONE OF THE WEAKER SUMMITS.

6. THE POLITICAL DECLARATION RECEIVES LITTLE ATTENTION AS COMPARED WITH THE ECONOMIC DECLARATION ITSELF, BUT AGAIN THE VERDICT IS WITHOUT EXCEPTION CRITICAL. THE POLITICAL DECLARATION TOO AMOUNTED TO LITTLE MORE THAN PLATITUDES.

7. THE PRESS ON 7 MAY REFLECTS A MORE POSITIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE SUMMIT BEING PROMOTED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND AN ATTEMPT TO MINIMISE THE FRANCO/GERMAN RIFT SO APPARENT DURING AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER IT. MITTERRAND'S VISIT TO BONN IN LATE MAY (THE COUNTERPART OF KOHL'S VISIT TO CHEQUERS ON 18/19 MAY) IS BEING PRESENTED AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN PARIS AND BONN.

BULLARD

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