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CDB 7/12*

NATO SUMMIT

1. TODAY'S WASHINGTON POST CARRIES AN ARTICLE BY JIM HOAGLAND ARGUING DISOBLIGINGLY AGAINST A JUNE SUMMIT IN LONDON AND IN FAVOUR OF AN EARLIER MEETING WITH WASHINGTON AS THE VENUE.
2. HOAGLAND SAYS THAT PRESIDENT-ELECT BUSH WAS CAREFUL TO AVOID GIVING A COMMITMENT TO THE PRIME MINISTER WHEN SHE RAISED IT WITH HIM HERE LAST MONTH QUOTE SAYING ONLY THAT IT WAS AN IDEA TO BE CONSIDERED. UNQUOTE. HE INTERPRETS BUSH'S MOTIVES AS NOT WANTING TO OFFEND OTHER ALLIES BY RE-ESTABLISHING SO QUICKLY THE QUOTE EXTRA SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP UNQUOTE AND WISHING TO AVOID ENTERING THE NATO SPOTLIGHT WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AS THE QUOTE HOOP-HOLDING RINGMASTER UNQUOTE.
3. HOAGLAND'S PIECE SEEMS TOO WELL INFORMED TO BE MERE SPECULATION AND IS LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN INSPIRED FROM WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION. THE FINGER OF SUSPICION POINTS AT THE EUROPEAN BUREAU OF STATE DEPARTMENT,

~~4.~~ WE DO NOT SUGGEST THAT THIS IS INDICATIVE OF A FIRM POSITION, WHETHER ON THE PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION AS A WHOLE OR OF BUSH HIMSELF ABOUT EITHER THE TIMING OR THE VENUE OF A SUMMIT. THERE IS NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, ANY OFFICIAL DECISION AGAINST LONDON. NOR PRESUMABLY WOULD WE WISH TO REMAIN INFLEXIBLE ON ALL ASPECTS OF THE ISSUE, GIVEN FOR EXAMPLE THE GERMAN CONSTRAINTS ON TIMING RAISED IN BONN TELNO. 1235. AND THE FINAL DECISIONS WILL BE A MATTER FOR CONSENSUS IN THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE, NOT JUST A POSITION TAKEN BY WASHINGTON ALONE. BUT THE ARTICLE DOES SERVE AS A REMINDER WHEN ADVANCING OUR POSITION THAT NOT ALL VIEWS HERE ARE FAVOURABLE.

ACLAND

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