

UNCLASSIFIED

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 172

OF 121405Z FEBRUARY 90

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OTTAWA (FOR SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTY)

GERMAN QUESTION: PRESS COVERAGE

SUMMARY

1. LEADING WEST GERMAN NEWSPAPERS REPORT THE PRIME MINISTER'S COMMENTS IN TORQUAY ON GERMAN UNITY, INTERPRETING THEM AS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF BRITISH OPPOSITION TO EARLY PROGRESS.

DETAIL

2. THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH TO YOUNG CONSERVATIVES AT THE WEEKEND IS REPORTED EXTENSIVELY IN TODAY'S NEWSPAPERS, WITH EMPHASIS ON HER STATEMENT THAT 'GREAT PLANS FOR PEACE CAN PRECEDE GREAT WARS'. DIE WELT (CONSERVATIVE) INTERPRETS HER REMARKS AS A FURTHER EFFORT TO APPLY THE BRAKES, BY INSISTING THAT A UNITED GERMANY COULD ONLY BE ACHIEVED WITH THE AGREEMENT OF THE 35 SIGNATORIES OF THE CSCE AGREEMENT. THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPORTED COMMENTS ON THE NEED FOR A LENGTHY PERIOD OF CONSULTATION AND BRITAIN'S UNWILLINGNESS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING OF THE GDR ARE ALSO MENTIONED. THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG (CONSERVATIVE) AND THE FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU (LEFT OF CENTRE) CARRY SIMILAR REPORTS.

3. UNDER THE HEADLINE 'THE WORLD SHARES OUR JOY, ONLY MAGGIE IS STILL BICKERING AND MAKING TROUBLE', BILD ZEITUNG (RIGHT-WING TABLOID: CIRCULATION 4.3 MILLION) LISTS WHAT IT SEES AS A BRITISH ATTEMPT TO DELAY REUNIFICATION FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE BY PLACING 4 MAJOR OBSTACLES IN ITS WAY - THE NEED FOR:

- AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE FOUR POWERS:
- AGREEMENT BY ALL MEMBERS OF NATO:
- AGREEMENT BY THE CSCE SIGNATORY STATES:
- LENGTHY CONSULTATION ON THE PROCEDURES THEMSELVES.

BILD GOES ON TO SUGGEST FACETIOUSLY THAT IF MRS THATCHER HAS HER WAY, THE LONDON ASSOCIATION OF TAXI DRIVERS, THE SOHO PIGEON BREEDERS' UNION, THE SCOTTISH WHISKY LOBBY, AND THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE SUPPORT OF LOCH NESS WILL ALSO HAVE TO BE CONSULTED.

NEVILLE - JONES

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