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[FRAME ECONOMIC]

UNCLASSIFIED

FM PARIS 281605Z MAY 84

TO PRIORITY F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 666 OF 28 MAY

INFO PRIORITY UKREP BRUSSELS

INFO SAVING ATHENS, BONN, BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN, DUBLIN, THE HAGUE,  
LUXEMBOURG, ROME.

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FRANCE/EC: INTERVIEW WITH DUMAS

SUMMARY

1. LE MATIN (SOCIALIST DAILY) CARRIED ON 28 MAY AN INTERVIEW WITH DUMAS, MINISTER FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS, DEVOTED TO POLITICAL UNION, THE BUDGET AND THE MULTI-SPEED CONCEPT. HE WAS VAGUE ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO MITTERRAND'S STRASBOURG SPEECH, BUT SAID THAT FRANCE WOULD HAVE CONCRETE PROPOSALS TO MAKE AT FONTAINEBLEAU. ON THE BUDGET HE MAINTAINED THAT THE COMMUNITY COULD CARRY ON, AT A LOWER LEVEL OF ACTIVITY, EVEN IF THE QUESTION OF BRITAIN'S CONTRIBUTION WAS NOT SETTLED AND SUGGESTED THAT THE INCREASE IN OWN RESOURCES COULD BE DISSOCIATED FROM THIS ISSUE. HE DECLARED HIS READINESS TO MEET YOU IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

DETAIL

2. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONING ABOUT MITTERRAND'S STRASBOURG SPEECH, IN PARTICULAR HIS REFERENCES TO POLITICAL UNION, DUMAS STUCK CLOSELY TO MITTERRAND'S FORMULATIONS, BUT STRESSED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FRANCE'S SUPPORT FOR THE BASIC IDEA OF THE SPINELLI DRAFT TREATY, AND RECALLED THAT MITTERRAND HAD COMMENDED ITS INSPIRATION (RATHER THAN ITS SPECIFIC PROPOSALS). HE ALSO REMINDED THE INTERVIEWER THAT BEFORE SPEAKING OF POLITICAL UNION, MITTERRAND HAD ARGUED THE NEED TO CONSOLIDATE THE EXISTING STRUCTURE. FRANCE WOULD MAKE PROPOSALS TO HER PARTNERS AT FONTAINEBLEAU ON EACH OF THE QUESTIONS MENTIONED BY MITTERRAND, INCLUDING THE POSSIBLE TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION. HE, DUMAS, WOULD HAVE TO SET TO WORK TO GIVE MITTERRAND'S GENERAL APPROACH A MORE CONCRETE FORM, INCLUDING THE IDEA OF A PERMANENT SECRETARIAT FOR THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, WHERE NO FRENCH JUDGEMENT HAD YET BEEN MADE ON THE VARIOUS POSSIBLE FORMULAE.

3. DUMAS DENIED THAT MITTERRAND HAD BEEN SUGGESTING A CONFERENCE OF LESS THAN TEN MEMBERS ON POLITICAL UNION OR HAD AIMED HIS REMARKS ABOUT A TWO-SPEED EUROPE AT BRITAIN. HE HAD SIMPLY WANTED TO LEAVE A CERTAIN FLEXIBILITY. THE HARD CORE OF THE COMMUNITY WAS THE SIX. ONE COULD BUILD AROUND IT IN CONCENTRIC CIRCLES OF DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS. DUMAS SAID THAT HE HIMSELF WAS IN FAVOUR OF DOING AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AT THE LEVEL OF THE TEN AND HAD NOTED WITH PLEASURE YOUR STATEMENT THAT BRITAIN DID NOT INTEND TO BE LEFT OUT OF NEW PROJECTS.

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4. ON BUDGET IMBALANCES, DUMAS DENIED THAT MITTERRAND HAD HARDENED HIS POSITION. HE HAD SIMPLY RECALLED THE PRINCIPLES WHICH UNDERLAY THE POSITION OF THE OTHER NINE. PRESSED ON WHETHER ANYTHING NEW COULD BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT A SETTLEMENT OF THE BRITISH PROBLEM, DUMAS OBSERVED THAT ONE COULD DO LESS WITH LESS MONEY, BUT WENT ON TO SUGGEST, WITHOUT BEING SPECIFIC, THAT THE BRITISH RESERVE ON THE INCREASE IN OWN RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR ENLARGEMENT, COULD BE LIFTED EVEN IF A SOLUTION ON THE BRITISH CONTRIBUTION WAS DEFERRED. (HE AIMED THE SAME THOUGHT TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS FAC ON 22 MAY, BUT HIMSELF QUESTIONED WHETHER THE HOUSE WOULD EVER ACCEPT IT). AS FOR MAKING UP THE GAP CAUSED BY NECESSARY AGRICULTURAL SPENDING, THE COMMISSION WOULD HAVE TO PUT FORWARD A SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET. THIS COULD BE VOTED BY QUALIFIED MAJORITY, EVEN THOUGH UNANIMITY WAS REQUIRED FOR AN INCREASE IN OWN RESOURCES. ON THE BRITISH PROBLEM ITSELF, EVERYTHING COULD BE DISCUSSED AND KOHL HAD BEEN QUITE RIGHT TO SAY ON 20 MAY THAT EVERYONE MUST MAKE AN EFFORT, BUT BRITISH SALAMI TACTICS COULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO SUCCEED. DUMAS SAID THAT DURING YOUR VISIT TO PARIS ON 25 MAY YOU HAD PROPOSED A MEETING WITH HIM IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN PARIS OR LONDON AND, WHILE NO ARRANGEMENTS HAD YET BEEN MADE, HE WAS ALWAYS AVAILABLE.

F C O PLEASE PASS SAVING ADDRESSEES.

FRETWELL

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