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THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION: FRG VIEWS

1. ALTHOUGH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT FORMED A POSITIVE ASSESSMENT OF REAGAN WHEN THEY MET LAST NOVEMBER, AND THE APPOINTMENT OF HAIG AS SECRETARY OF STATE HAS BEEN GENERALLY WELCOMED HERE, THE BALANCE OF GERMAN MINISTERIAL AND OFFICIAL OPINION ABOUT THE INCOMING US ADMINISTRATION IS MARKEDLY CAUTIOUS. SCHMIDT AND GENSCHER HAVE BOTH CONTINUED TO MAKE CONFIDENT AND WARMLY APPROVING NOISES IN PUBLIC: BUT IN PRIVATE A MORE SCEPTICAL AND APPREHENSIVE NOTE IS DISCERNIBLE. IN THE WORDS OF AN INFLUENTIAL OFFICIAL IN THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE, NOTHING COULD BE WORSE THAN CARTER AND HIS MAFIA: BUT THE WAY AHEAD IN US/FRG RELATIONS IS QUOTE STILL STREWN WITH LANDMINES UNQUOTE.

2. REAGAN'S ECONOMIC APPOINTEES ARE REGARDED AS UNKNOWN QUANTITIES. THEY AND THE REST OF THE LEADING MEMBERS OF THE TEAM ARE BELIEVED TO BE COMPETENT BUT NOONE KNOWS VERY MUCH ABOUT THEM. THE IMPORTANT EXCEPTION IS HAIG. THE GERMANS RECOGNISE THAT HE WILL BE TOUGH AND DIFFICULT TO HANDLE: BUT THEY FEEL HE HAS THE SUPREMELY GERMAN QUALITY OF BEING PREDICTABLE AND THAT HIS TIME IN BRUSSELS HAS GIVEN HIM A FEEL FOR EUROPE AND ITS PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF DEFENCE POLICY. HIS REMARKS BEFORE THE SENATE ABOUT EUROPEAN DEFENCE SPENDING (WASHINGTON TELEGRAM NO. 90) WERE WARMLY RECEIVED HERE (AS WERE WEINBERGER'S REMARKS IN THE SAME SENSE EARLIER). THIS GOOD IMPRESSION HAS BEEN REINFORCED BY THE APPOINTMENT TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT TEAM OF STOESSEL AND EAGLEBURGER (MY TELEGRAM NO.31). THE LIKELY INFLUENCE OF KISSINGER ON THE FORMULATION OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IS ALSO SEEN AS BEING ON BALANCE A PLUS, ALBEIT WITH RESERVATIONS.

3. BUT THE GERMANS ARE FAR FROM CONFIDENT THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL SHOW REAL UNDERSTANDING FOR THE EUROPEAN APPROACH TO THE PROBLEMS OF EAST/WEST RELATIONS OR THAT THE PURSUIT OF ARMS CONTROL WILL RANK SUFFICIENTLY HIGH IN THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S ORDER OF PRIORITIES. THE LATTER ISSUE HAS ACQUIRED SHARPENED DOMESTIC SIGNIFICANCE IN THE FRG RECENTLY IN VIEW OF THE INCREASED RESTLESSNESS WITHIN THE SPD AT THE ABSENCE OF PROGRESS ON SALT II, HIGHLIGHTED BY KARSTEN VOIGHT'S CLAIM (MY TELEGRAM NO.25 NOT TO ALL) THAT NON-RATIFICATION OF SALT II WOULD CALL THE NATO DOUBLE DECISION INTO QUESTION. THE FACT THAT HAIG DID NOT MENTION DETENTE IN HIS TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE WAS WIDELY NOTED: AND THERE IS ALSO CONCERN THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL TEND TO SEE THE THIRD WORLD PROBLEMS LARGELY

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IN AN EAST/WEST PERSPECTIVE. US PRESSURE ON ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES FOR A LARGER DEFENCE CONTRIBUTION AND FOR PARTICIPATION IN (OR SUPPORT FOR) DEFENCE DEPLOYMENTS OUTSIDE THE NATO AREA IS SEEN AS ANOTHER, RELATED AREA OF PROBABLE FRICTION. ALL IN ALL, THE GERMANS SEE THE BAROMETER FOR US-EUROPEAN RELATIONS AS POINTING TO UNSETTLED.

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