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DESKBY 201800Z
FM PARIS 201730Z JAN 84
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 63 OF 20 JANUARY
INFO PRIORITY UKMIS GENEVA ROUTINE BONN, WASHINGTON, UKREP BRUSSELS

YOUR TEL NO 36 TO BONN: PROPOSED REVIEW OF HIGH ENERGY PARTICLE PHYSICS.

SUMMARY

1 THE REVIEW AND THE IMPLIED POSSIBILITY OF WITHDRAWAL WOULD GO DOWN BADLY IN FRANCE, INCLUDING WITH MITTERRAND PERSONALLY. WITHDRAWAL WOULD AFFECT WIDER INTERESTS.

DETAIL

2. MITTERRAND EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO CERN WHEN HE INAUGURATED THE NEW LEP RING NEAR GENEVA ON 13 SEPTEMBER. IN HIS SPEECH HE PAID TRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF CERN AND ITS TALENTED RESEARCH TEAMS AND HELD IT UP AS AN EXAMPLE WHICH COULD BE USED AS A MODEL FOR FUTURE EUROPEAN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH. CERN, HE SAID, BORE WITNESS TO THE FAITH PLACED IN IT BY THE MEMBER STATES AND TO THE POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE EUROPEAN TECHNICAL INDEPENDENCE. THE SCHEME HAD BEEN APPROVED DESPITE THE ECONOMIC RECESSION. RECALLING SUCCESSFUL EUROPEAN COLLABORATION IN SPACE AND AVIATION, MITTERRAND SAID THAT A POLICY OF EUROPEAN COLLABORATION IN APPLIED SCIENCES THROUGH COMMON EXPERIMENTAL FACILITIES WOULD BE A CORNERSTONE ON WHICH TO BUILD A BROADER EUROPEAN RESEARCH POLICY. SPEAKING ABOUT THE FUTURE ROLE OF CERN, MITTERRAND SAID THAT FRANCE WOULD SPARE NO EFFORT IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE THE RESOURCES NECESSARY TO CAPITALISE ON THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE NEW FACILITY.

3. IT IS CLEAR FROM CONTACTS WE HAD AT THE TIME WITH STAFF AT THE ELYSEE WHO ACCOMPANIED THE PRESIDENT TO CERN THAT HE WAS EXPRESSING A VERY FIRMLY HELD PERSONAL VIEW WHEN SPEAKING IN THESE TERMS.

IS THEREFORE REASONABLE TO CONCLUDE THAT HE WOULD BE PERSONALLY CONCERNED BY ANY SUGGESTION THAT THE UK MIGHT WITHDRAW FROM CERN. WE WOULD BE KNOCKING A HOLE IN HIS IDEAS FOR A BROADER BASED EUROPEAN RESEARCH POLICY AND TARNISHING THIS MODEL FOR FUTURE EUROPEAN COLLABORATION IN MAJOR TECHNOLOGICAL VENTURES. HE IS UNLIKELY TO TAKE KINDLY TO IT AND IT COULD WELL AFFECT HIS ATTITUDE ON OTHER ISSUES.

4. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REVIEW COMMITTEE IN THE UK WOULD ITSELF PROBABLY BE REGARDED AS A PRECURSOR TO AN EVENTUAL UK WITHDRAWAL. INDEED, THE WARNING SHOTS FIRED IN THE 1 DECEMBER EDITION OF NATURE HAVE NOT GONE UNNOTICED HERE.

Of course the LEP ring is largely on French soil

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5. AN EVENTUAL DECISION BY THE UK TO WITHDRAW FROM CERN WOULD BE GREETED WITH DISMAY BY THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY. IT WOULD BE TAKEN AS AN ILLUSTRATION OF BRITISH UNWILLINGNESS TO BACK THE LARGE-SCALE SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATION NEEDED TO MAINTAIN CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE IN EUROPE
6. IF THE UK WERE TO WITHDRAW THE FRENCH POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND TECHNOLOGICAL INDEPENDENCE FROM THE US IS SUCH THAT THEY WOULD PROBABLY BE WILLING TO INCREASE THEIR OWN CONTRIBUTION, DESPITE THEIR OWN ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES, IN ORDER TO KEEP CERN IN BUSINESS. THEY DID THIS WHEN WE DROPPED OUT OF THE INSTITUT LUE LANGEVIN (ILL) AT GRENOBLE AND WENT AHEAD WITHOUT THE UK UNTIL WE ASKED TO BUY OUR WAY BACK IN. OUR EARLY PARTICIPATION IN AIRBUS AND ARIANE WENT THROUGH A SIMILAR PHASE. THERE ARE OTHER EXAMPLES.
7. UNTIL RECENTLY THE UK HAD A REPUTATION IN FRANCE AS AN UNRELIABLE PARTNER IN LARGE EUROPEAN SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROJECTS. WE HAVE HEARD LESS OF THAT AS BIT BY BIT WE HAVE RESTORED OUR REPUTATION. BUT THE PROSPECT OF WITHDRAWAL FROM CERN WOULD REVIVE EARLIER DOUBTS AND CAST A SHADOW OVER OTHER FORMS OF COOPERATION WE ARE SEEKING INCLUDING THOSE IN THE DEFENCE AND COMMERCIAL SPHERES.

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