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MILAN EUROPEAN COUNCIL: FURTHER GERMAN PRESS REACTIONS

SUMMARY

1. HMG'S IRRITATION WITH GERMANY MADE THE HEADLINES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK, TO BE REPLACED WITH MORE MEASURED ARTICLES ABOUT OUR REASONABLE APPROACH. SOME PAPERS CONTINUE TO QUESTION KOHL'S HANDLING OF EUROPEAN POLICY AND THE TRUE EUROPEAN CREDENTIALS OF THE MILAN MAJORITY. OTHERS REFLECT REMARKS BY KOHL AND HIS OFFICIALS ABOUT FRANCO-GERMAN UNITY AND BRITAIN'S RELUCTANCE TO TAKE PART IN PRE-MILAN CONSULTATIONS.

DETAIL

2. HMG'S IRRITATION WITH THE GERMANS MADE THE HEADLINES EARLIER IN THE WEEK OVER ARTICLES ABOUT THE PRIME MINISTER'S POST-MILAN BBC INTERVIEW AND INGHAM'S ALLEGED REMARKS ABOUT VOLCANIC FURY. SINCE THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON 2 JULY GERMAN CORRESPONDENTS IN LONDON HAVE REMARKED ON THE REASONABLE AND CONSTRUCTIVE LINE WHICH WE ARE TAKING, AND OUR WISH TO PROVE OUR EUROPEAN CREDENTIALS. HILL IN THE STUTTGARTER ZEITUNG ON 4 JULY COMMENTED 'THE BRITISH ARE THE MOST LIKELY TO BE ABLE TO BUILD A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE MINORITY AND THE MILAN MAJORITY. BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY IS NOW ENTIRELY ORIENTED TOWARDS THE COMMUNITY. THE BRITISH ARE NOT HALF-HEARTED OR LUKEWARN EUROPEANS, BUT EUROPEANS OF A DIFFERENT SORT, WHO BELONG TO THE DIVERSITY OF EUROPE. AFTER THEIR LATE ACCESSION THEY IRRITATED CONTINENTAL EUROPEANS SO GREATLY WITH THEIR BUDGET DISPUTE THAT AFTER THE SETTLEMENT OF THIS PROBLEM ONE COULD HARDLY COME TO TERMS WITH THEIR NEW ROLE AS 'GOOD' EUROPEANS. THE CAREFULLY PREPARED BRITISH ACTION PROGRAMME FOR MILAN SEEMED ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE. BRITAIN WILL TAKE PART IN THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE. BY THEN MRS THATCHER WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER SHE WANTS TO PRESENT HER CONCEPTION OF EUROPEAN UNITY AS AN ALTERNATIVE OR AS AN EXTENSION TO THE EUROPE WHICH THE OTHERS HAVE IN MIND'. GRUDINSKI IN AN ARTICLE IN THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ON THE SAME DAY TALKS OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATESMANLIKE MANNER IN THE COMMONS, AND DESCRIBES THE BRITISH PRE-MILAN PACKAGE, WHICH AVOIDED A FUTILE ATTEMPT TO PRESENT TREATY AMENDMENTS TO 12 NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS, AS 'SHEER COMMONSENSE, BORN OF SOBER EXPERIENCE'.



3. TODAY'S PRESS REFLECTS CHANCELLOR KOHL'S PRESS BRIEFING (MY TELNO 687), PICKING UP IN PARTICULAR HIS POINTS ON FRANCO-GERMAN COOPERATION, AND ON RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN, INCLUDING THE CLAIM THAT WE HAD BEEN RELUCTANT TO TAKE PART IN DISCUSSIONS BEFORE MILAN. AN ARTICLE IN TODAY'S RHEINISCHER MERKUR BY ONE OF KOHL'S UNOFFICIAL ADVISER'S, WEIDENFELD, GOES FURTHER: 'THE OVERALL PERSPECTIVE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN KNOWN BY ITS PARTNERS FOR MONTHS. DETAILED COORDINATION TOOK PLACE BILATERALLY, INCLUDING FIVE FRANCO-GERMAN WORKING MEETINGS AT OFFICIAL LEVEL IN WHICH MANY AMBITIOUS GERMAN PROPOSALS WERE SACRIFICED TO FRENCH RESERVES. THERE WERE ALSO DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ITALIAN PRESIDENCY, INCLUDING THREE TRILATERAL WORKING MEETINGS BETWEEN THE GERMANS, ITALIANS AND FRENCH. ENGLAND REFUSED TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS PROCESS OF CONSULTATION. THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER WAS HOWEVER INFORMED AND HER IDEAS INCLUDED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. THE BENELUX COUNTRIES WERE INFORMED BY KOHL HIMSELF AT THE EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY MEETING IN ROME. THE FINAL VERSION OF THE FRANCO-GERMAN DRAFT WAS HOWEVER DELAYED BECAUSE THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT FIXED ITS FINAL POSITION ONLY THREE DAYS BEFORE MILAN'. HIS CONCLUSION IS THAT FRANCE AND GERMANY ALONE CAN PROVIDE THE IMPULSE FOR EUROPEAN UNION, IF NECESSARY ON A TWO-SPEED MODEL.

4. SOME PAPERS ARE MORE SCEPTICAL. TODAY'S DIE ZEIT SAYS THAT ONCE AGAIN THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL DISAPPOINTED THOSE WHO HAD HOPED THAT IT WOULD PROVE A FINAL COURT OF APPEAL. INSTEAD OF REACHING FINAL DECISIONS, IT DELEGATED THEM TO OTHER BODIES. THE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION WHICH THE ITALIAN PRESIDENCY PROVOKED SIGNIFIED A RIFT IN THE COMMUNITY. BUT EVEN WITHOUT THE BRITISH, DANES AND GREEKS THERE WAS NO 'DIRETTISSIMA' FROM MILAN LEADING TO EUROPEAN UNION. THE DIFFICULTY LAY RATHER IN THE FACT THAT THE SEVEN CHAMPIONS OF FINALITY WERE NOT INVULNERABLE AGAINST THEIR FEAR OF A SUPRANATIONAL EUROPE AND LOSS OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY. OR HAD PARIS PERHAPS MADE UP ITS MIND TO ACCEPT A STRONGER PARLIAMENT? WAS THE PAYMASTER BONN READY TO BOW TO THE MAJORITY OVER FINANCIAL DECISION? COULD ONE CONCEIVE OF A ROME WHICH WOULD REALLY OBEY THE INSTRUCTIONS OF A COMMISSION CAPABLE OF IMPOSING ITS WILL? AFTER MILAN IT WAS BY NO MEANS AS CLEAR AS THE FRENCH PRESIDENT CLAIMED THAT SOME MEMBER STATES WANTED A STRONG, UNITED EUROPE, AND THE OTHERS A WEAK EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. THE TEST WOULD COME WHEN THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE WENT INTO DETAILS AND PAINFUL SACRIFICE RATHER THAN GENEROUS RHETORIC WAS CALLED FOR. WAS IT NOT OF ALL PEOPLE THE BRITISH WHO HAD APPEARED IN MILAN WITH A CONCEPT WHICH COULD HAVE PRODUCED RAPID RELIEF FOR MANY OF EUROPE'S ILLS? THEIR IDEAS ON THE



INTERNAL MARKET, TECHNOLOGY AND DECISION-MAKING WERE NOT SO DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF THE CARD-CARRYING EUROPEANS. KOHL'S CONVICTION WAS ON THE OTHER HAND NOT ENTIRELY AT ONE WITH THE PICTURE WHICH OTHER PARTNERS HAD HAD OF BONN RECENTLY. IT WAS ONLY AT FIRST SIGHT THAT THE FRANCO-GERMAN TEAM HAD WORKED WITHOUT FRICTION AS A MOTOR FOR EUROPEAN UNION. ON CLOSER INSPECTION THERE HAD BEEN A NUMBER OF FALSE STARTS, WITH FRENCH INDECISIVENESS AS A PRIME CAUSE. A TWO-SPEED EUROPE MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE EMS OR POLITICAL COOPERATION, BUT WHEN IT CAME TO THE TREATY OF ROME THE SAME SPEED FOR ALL WAS REQUIRED.

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