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TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 895

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INFO PRIORITY MODUK, WASHINGTON, UKDEL NATO, PARIS, MOSCOW, ROME

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NY TELNO 875: PRESS COMMENT ON KOHL'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON

SUMMARY

1. MASSIVE PRESS COVERAGE AND HIGH MARKS FOR KOHL'S HANDLING OF THE WASHINGTON TALKS.

DETAIL

2. THERE HAS BEEN LENGTHY AND DETAILED REPORTING OF KOHL'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON, ACCOMPANIED BY GENSCHER AND WOERNER. KOHL IS PORTRAYED AS SPEAKING AUTHORITATIVELY ON REYKJAVIK SUBJECTS, WITH THE FULL SUPPORT OF BOTH FOREIGN AND DEFENCE MINISTERS (A POINT NOT TO BE TAKEN AS READ). THERE IS ALMOST NO CRITICAL COMMENT.

3. KOHL'S PARTY HAVE TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE SPEAKS ALSO ON BEHALF OF THE PRIME MINISTER, FOLLOWING A TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH HER.

4. THE PRESS EMPHASISE KOHL'S WISH TO DEMONSTRATE SUPPORT FOR REAGAN POST-REYKJAVIK AND TO ENCOURAGE EARLY PROGRESS ON THOSE ELEMENTS OF THE ARMS CONTROL AGENDA WHICH ARE IN REACH, PARTICULARLY INF. KOHL IS SAID TO SUPPORT REAGAN IN OPPOSING SOVIET SDI LINKAGE. STRESS IS ALSO LAID ON KOHL'S AIM OF APPLYING A CORRECTIVE TO THE PRESIDENT'S THINKING OVER FULL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT. 'NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT ONLY AFTER CONVENTIONAL PARITY' IS A TYPICAL HEADLINE TODAY. IN EXPRESSING MISGIVINGS ABOUT FAR-REACHING DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS WHICH MIGHT CALL EXISTING ALLIANCE STRATEGY INTO QUESTION, KOHL CLAIMS TO BE SPEAKING FOR THE EUROPEANS IN GENERAL, INCLUDING THE UK.

5. THERE IS ALSO GOOD COVERAGE TODAY FOR THE GLENEABLES NPG MEETING. STATE SECRETARY RUEHL IS REPORTED AS SATISFIED WITH THE FORMULA ON SRINF, AND AS SAYING THERE IS AN 'ORGANIC LINK' BETWEEN LONG RANGE AND SHORT RANGE SYSTEMS (150KM - 1000KM MENTIONED IN GERMAN PRESS). SOME NEWSPAPERS EXPRESS SURPRISE AT THE NPG SUPPORT FOR SDI, BUT GO ON TO NOTE THE DIFFERENCE OF VIEW BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND EUROPE ON WHAT RESEARCH IS PERMISSIBLE. THE OVERALL FLAVOUR IS OF ALLIANCE SUPPORT FOR REAGAN'S POSITION AT REYKJAVIK. SUPPOSED BRITISH AND GERMAN MISGIVINGS ABOUT IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPEAN SECURITY INTERESTS ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN ALLAYED.

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[This is what we asked Kohl to do, following your meeting with Mitterand]