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FM BONN

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 924

OF 081800Z DECEMBER 87

AND TO IMMEDIATE MODUK, PARIS, UKDEL NATO BRUSSELS, WASHINGTON

AND TO PRIORITY MOSCOW, ROME

GORBACHEV'S MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER

SUMMARY

1. WIDESPREAD AND FAVOURABLE REPORTING OF GORBACHEV'S MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

DETAIL

2. THERE IS EXTENSIVE COVERAGE THROUGHOUT THE GERMAN MEDIA TODAY OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH GORBACHEV AT BRIZE NORTON. HER COMMENT THAT THE MEETING WAS EXCELLENT, AND THE INF AGREEMENT AN HISTORIC ONE, ARE WIDELY REPORTED. THE PRIME MINISTER IS DESCRIBED AS CONVEYING THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY'S WELCOME FOR THE INF TREATY. SEVERAL PAPERS NOTE HER CLEAR STATEMENT THAT THE UK SHOULD REMAIN AN INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR POWER.

3. THE PRESS DESCRIBES GORBACHEV'S AIM AS BEING TO USE THE MEETING AS A TRIAL RUN FOR THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT, 'TANKING UP ON IDEAS, NOT JUST PETROL'. THE UK'S SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US IS THE OBVIOUS REASON FOR THE CHOICE OF STOPOVER. DIE WELT (CONSERVATIVE) COMMENTS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAS EVIDENTLY ESTABLISHED A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GORBACHEV AS WELL: TALK OF THE UK'S 'MAJOR POWER' ROLE IS NOT MUCH EXAGGERATED.

4. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN HAVE TAKEN A VERY UPBEAT LINE ON THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT IN GENERAL, DRAWING ATTENTION TO THE NEXT STEPS IN THE DISARMAMENT FIELD (IN FAMILIAR TERMS). KOHL WILL GIVE A FORMAL GOVERNMENT STATEMENT TO THE BUNDESTAG ON 10 DECEMBER, FOLLOWED BY A FULL DEBATE. SOME GERMAN POLITICIANS (EG RUEHE, CDU) EMPHASISE HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT THE SENATE RATIFY THE INF TREATY, IF US CREDIBILITY IS TO BE MAINTAINED.

5. IN COMMENTING ON THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION TO THE INF STATIONING DEBATE, THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE (CONSERVATIVE) SAYS THAT NO PRESENT WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT WOULD NOW BE ABLE TO GO THROUGH WITH THE STATIONING DECISION, A POINT WHICH THOSE PROPOSING SNF

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MODERNISATION SHOULD NOTE. IT COMMENTS THAT REMOVING THE  
CONVENTIONAL IMBALANCE IS THE NEXT PRIORITY.

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