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FM PARIS  
TO PRIORITY FCO  
TELNO 1260  
OF 081629Z DECEMBER 87  
INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON  
INFO ROUTINE MOSCOW  
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GORBACHEV'S STOP-OVER IN BRITAIN

SUMMARY

1. FULL COVERAGE. THE STOP-OVER IS SEEN TO CONFIRM THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH GORBACHEV AND REAGAN AND HER ROLE AS EUROPEAN SPOKESMAN. ONLY ONE OR TWO WHIFFS OF SOUR GRAPES.

DETAIL

2. THE FRENCH MEDIA (INCLUDING TELEVISION) GAVE GORBACHEV'S STOP-OVER FULL AND GENERALLY FAIR COVERAGE, WITH MUCH COMMENT MIXED IN THE FACTUAL NEWS REPORTING.

3. LIBERATION (LEFT OF CENTRE) SAYS THAT MRS THATCHER WON TWO ADVANTAGES FROM GORBACHEV'S STOP-OVER: FIRST, SHE APPEARED AGAIN AS A PRIVILEGED INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON, HER FRIENDSHIP WITH GORBACHEV ECHOING THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH REAGAN, AND, SECOND, THE GORBACHEV STOP-OVER UNDERLINED THAT SINCE HER MOSCOW VISIT LAST MARCH SHE HAS GRADUALLY INSTALLED HERSELF AS THE SPOKESMAN OF THE EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE IN THE DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS.

4. LE MATIN (SOCIALIST) SAYS THAT GORBACHEV WILL HAVE FOUND THE VISIT USEFUL IN INFORMING HIMSELF BOTH ABOUT REAGAN'S MOOD ON THE EVE OF THE SUMMIT AND ABOUT THE EUROPEANS' FEELINGS. FOR THE PRIME MINISTER IT WAS A PRESTIGE OPERATION, DESTINED TO CONFIRM HER INTERNATIONAL STATURE AND HER SPECIAL INFLUENCE WITH REAGAN. IT SAYS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER UNDERLINED THE UNITY OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE BEHIND THE US AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF DIVIDING THE ALLIANCE. IN THIS SHE WAS ABLE TO DRAW ON THE EAST/WEST DECLARATION AGREED AT THE COPENHAGEN EUROPEAN COUNCIL. AS WELL AS ACTING AS A SPOKESMAN FOR EUROPE SHE SPOKE ABOUT OTHER DISARMAMENT QUESTIONS, SDI, AFGHANISTAN, THE MIDDLE EAST, AND HUMAN RIGHTS, NOTABLY JEWISH EMIGRATION. IT CONCLUDES THAT THESE DISCUSSIONS WILL PROBABLY NOT HAVE HAD A GREAT IMPACT ON THE NEGOTIATIONS BUT CONFIRMED THAT EVEN

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WHEN MRS THATCHER IS ONLY THE SECOND FIDDLE, SHE PLAYS HER SCORE WITH ARDOUR.

5. FIGARO (RIGHT-WING) HINTS AT FRENCH SOUR GRAPES, ADMITTING THAT THE STOP-OVER INCREASED MRS THATCHER'S PLACE ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE, BUT ALSO QUOTING THE BBC AS SAYING THAT IT HAD GONE LARGELY UNREMARKED IN WASHINGTON. IT SAYS THAT GORBACHEV STOPPED IN BRITAIN TO SEEK A SORT OF EUROPEAN SEAL OF APPROVAL FOR THE INF TREATY, AND THAT MRS THATCHER, REAGAN'S BEST ALLY, AGREED WILLINGLY, ALTHOUGH SHE REPEATED HER ATTACHMENT TO THE INDEPENDENCE OF BRITAIN'S NUCLEAR DETERRENT.

6. LE MONDE'S REPORT STRIKES AN IRONIC AND MOCKING NOTE. IT SAYS THAT THE BRIZE NORTON MEETING TOOK THE PLACE OF ANY PROPER CONSULTATION OF THE EUROPEAN LEADERS: IN THE EYES OF THE SUPER-POWERS EUROPE SEEMED ONLY TO MERIT SUCH QUOTE FAST-FOOD DIPLOMACY UNQUOTE.

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