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MDLIAN 3072

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TELNO 705
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SIC EME

MITTERRAND ON EAST/WEST RELATIONS AND ARMS CONTROL.

SUMMARY

1. POSITIVE TONE BUT NO SPECIFIC RESPONSE TO GORBACHEV PROPOSALS. ARGUES THAT CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL SHOULD TAKE PRIORITY OVER NATO TNW MODERNIZATION. A MITTERRAND/GORBACHEV MEETING TO BE HELD THIS YEAR.

DETAIL

2. MITTERRAND GAVE A LIVE TELEVISION INTERVIEW ON 14 JULY, INCLUDING POSITIVE REFERENCES TO EAST/WEST RELATIONS. THE OFFICIAL TEXT IS NOT YET AVAILABLE (GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS ARE CLOSED TODAY), AND TODAY'S FINANCIAL TIMES SEEMS TO HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD MITTERRAND'S POSITION ON THE GORBACHEV PROPOSAL FOR A PAN-EUROPEAN SUMMIT: IN FACT MITTERRAND CAREFULLY AVOIDED COMMENTING SPECIFICALLY ON THIS PROPOSAL. HE STRESSED HIS SUPPORT FOR A REDUCTION OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS IN CENTRAL EUROPE - QUOTE THE EAST'S FORCES ARE IN THEORY GREATLY SUPERIOR TO THE WEST'S UNQUOTE: THIS IMBALANCE MUST BE PUT RIGHT. HE SAID THAT HIS IDEAS ON THIS HAD BEEN ACCEPTED AT THE NATO SUMMIT IN BRUSSELS. NOW GORBACHEV WAS DEFENDING COMPARABLE IDEAS, AND THIS WAS TO BE WELCOMED AND ENCOURAGED. BUT HE WOULD NOT ACCEPT ANY GORBACHEV PROPOSAL WHICH DID NOT GO IN THE DIRECTION OF RESTORING A BALANCE AND WHICH WOULD LEAD TO ENDLESS, FRUITLESS DISCUSSIONS. MITTERRAND SAID THAT HE WOULD CERTAINLY MEET GORBACHEV AGAIN DURING THIS YEAR.

3. DESPITE RECENT ENCOURAGING SIGNS THAT SENIOR FRENCH MILITARY AND OFFICIALS ACCEPT THE NEED FOR NATO TO KEEP UP TO DATE ITS THEATRE NUCLEAR FORCES, MITTERRAND ALSO SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THAT CONVENTIONAL ARMS REDUCTIONS SHOULD TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THE MODERNIZATION, IE STRENGTHENING (SIC), OF SHORT-RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES.

4. IN A MESSAGE TO THE ARMED FORCES ON 13 JULY, MITTERRAND SPOKE POSITIVELY OF DIALOGUE AND OF VERIFIED DISARMAMENT BUT ALSO SAID

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THAT PEACE AND LIBERTY WERE FRAGILE AND DEMANDED CONTINUAL
VIGILANCE.

FERGUSSON

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