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YOUR TELNO 1337 TO WASHINGTON: NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE:  
FRENCH VIEWS

## SUMMARY

1. FRENCH DISIRE FOR A NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE UNLIKELY TO HAVE BEEN DIMMED BY THE PARIS ECONOMIC SUMMIT. FURTHER PORPOSALS LIKELY, PERHAPS AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THOUGH THE FRENCH WILL NOT WISH TO RUSH. RECOMMENDATION THAT WE TALK OPENLY TO THEM ABOUT THIS SUBJECT.

## DETAIL

2. I AGREE WITH US SECRETARY OF STATE BAKER'S VIEW THAT THE RECENT ECONOMIC SUMMIT HERE WILL HAVE POSTPONED RATHER THAN SEEN OFF FOR GOOD FRENCH ATTEMPTS TO RELAUNCH SOME SORT OF NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE. THE NEED TO DO MORE TO HELP THE THIRD WORLD IS DEAR TO MITTERRAND'S HEART, AND IS LIKELY TO BE A CONTINUING FEATURE OF HIS TENURE OF OFFICE. HE WILL CLAIM CREDIT FOR MUCH OF WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN ACHIEVED, SEEING HIS OWN INITIATIVE LAST SUMMER AS THE CATALYST LEADING TO THE TORONTO AGREEMENT ON DEBT RELIEF FOR THE POOREST, HIS MIDDLE INCOME DEBT PLAN PUT FORWARD AT LAST AUTUMN'S UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY AS THE PRECURSOR OF THE BRADY PLAN, NOW SUCCESSFULLY PUT TO THE TEST OVER MEXICO, AND HIS WRITE OFF OF DEBTS FOR THE POOREST COUNTRIES, ANNOUNCED EARLIER THIS YEAR IN DAKAR, AS A PATH DOWN WHICH OTHERS SHOULD GO TOO - IF, UNLIKE US, THEY HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO. BUT HE WILL NOT WANT TO STOP THERE. WE CAN EXPECT PROPOSALS FOR THE RELIEF OF PUBLIC DEBT OF THOSE MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES, MANY OF THEM FRENCH CLIENTS, WHICH FALL IN BETWEEN THE POOREST AND THE MIDDLE INCOME CATEGORIES. FURTHER INITIATIVES LINKING AID AND THE ENVIRONMENT ARE POSSIBLE TOO: MITTERRAND ANNOUNCED AFTER THE PARIS SUMMIT THAT THE FRENCH WOULD HOLD AN EXPERT LEVEL NORTH/SOUTH MEETING NEXT YEAR TO DISCUSS THE PORPOSED SAHARAN OBSERVATORY.

3. I DOUBT VERY MUCH WHETHER MITTERRAND WILL HAVE DROPPED THE IDEA OF A NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE TO PULL TOGETHER AND INSTITUTIONALISE THESE AND OTHER IDEAS. INDEED, IN HIS POST-SUMMIT PRESS CONFERENCE HE SAID: 'WHILE RECOGNISING THE OBSTACLES AND THE RESERVATIONS ABOUT

A NORTH/SOUTH CONFERENCE, EVEN A CONFERENCE LIMITED TO A CERTAIN NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AS AT CANCUN, I HAVE EVERY INTENTION OF PURSUING THE PROPOSAL AND OF CONVINCING THOSE WHO MAY BE HESITATING'. BUT HE SAID HE WOULD NOT WANT TO RUSH INTO AN ILL-PREPARED DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE, RECOGNISING TOO THAT THE FAILURE OF CANCUN WAS ITS DAMAGING LACK OF EFFECTIVE FOLLOW-UP.

4. EXACTLY HOW MITTERRAND WILL TAKE MATTERS FORWARD IS NOT YET CLEAR. GIVEN THAT HE SAID DURING THE SUMMIT THAT HE WOULD ANSWER THE INDIAN/VENEZUELAN/SENEGAL/EGYPTIAN APPEAL 'IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE UN AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS' (PARA 2 OF TUR), I THINK WE CAN EXPECT JUST THAT. THE PRECEDENT OF MITTERRAND'S MIDDLE INCOME DEBT INITIATIVE AT LAST YEAR'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY INDICATES THAT THE LAUNCHING OF SOME FURTHER IDEAS AT THIS YEAR'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY MUST BE A POSSIBILITY. HE WILL NO DOUBT HOPE THAT THE FOUR THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES ROW IN THE SAME DIRECTION, AND WILL NO DOUBT ENCOURAGE THEM TO DO SO. WE CAN EXPECT SIMILAR TACTICS IN OTHER UN FORA.

5. WE NEED NOT BE TOO WORRIED ABOUT PROVOKING THE FRENCH INTO REOPENING THE ISSUE BY DISCUSSING IT WITH THEM (YOUR TUR PARA 7). THERE WILL BE A CONTINUING HEAD OF STEAM BEHIND IT WHATEVER WE SAY. I RECOMMEND THAT WE TALK TO THE FRENCH (AS WE WOULD DO ON OTHER, EG COMMUNITY, ISSUES WHERE WE DISAGREE WITH THEM), IN ORDER TO ENSURE WE EACH UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S POSITION, AND TO TRY TO STEER THEM - WHEN WE ARE CLEAR WHERE WE WANT TO GO - IN A SENSIBLE DIRECTION. THE MEETING IN LONDON ON 2 AUGUST BETWEEN BOISSIEU (QUAI ECONOMIC DIRECTOR) AND BAYNE MIGHT BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SOUND THEM OUT.

FERGUSSON

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