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PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH CHIRAC, 22 NOVEMBER: PRESS COMMENT.

SUMMARY

1. HIGH PROFILE AND POSITIVE COVERAGE IN LE FIGARO, CONCENTRATING ON PROSPECTS FOR THE COPENHAGEN EUROPEAN COUNCIL. LOWER KEY, MORE FACTUAL COMMENT ELSEWHERE, WITH THE COMMUNITY THE MAIN FOCUS, BUT OTHER SUBJECTS, INCLUDING YOUTH EXCHANGES, TOUCHED ON IN LA TRIBUNE DE L'ECONOMIE.

DETAIL

2. THE RIGHT-WING DAILY, LE FIGARO, DEVOTES ITS MAIN PAGE, ONE HEADLINE, A FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL AND ITS MAIN INSIDE PAGE STORY TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH CHIRAC YESTERDAY EVENING. THE HEADLINES ON THE FRONT PAGE (QUOTE EEC: THATCHER - CHIRAC CONVERGENCE UNQUOTE) AND PAGE 2 (QUOTE CHIRAC - THATCHER: AGREEMENT ON THE ESSENTIALS UNQUOTE) SET THE TONE. THE STORIES UNDERLINE THE BROAD AGREEMENT ON FUNDAMENTALS IN THE RUN-UP TO THE COPENHAGEN COUNCIL, QUOTING CHIRAC AS SAYING THAT HE WAS STRUCK BY THE IDENTITY OF VIEW ON KEY ISSUES. THE PAPER STRESSES THE BRITISH VIEW ON THE NEED TO HAVE EFFECTIVE BUDGET DISCIPLINE, INCLUDING AGRICULTURE STABILISERS, IN PLACE BEFORE ANY AGREEMENT ON INCREASING OWN RESOURCES, ADDING THAT THE FRENCH ARE NOT OPPOSED TO STABILISERS, WHICH ARE UP FOR DISCUSSION AGAIN THIS WEEK BY AGRICULTURE MINISTERS. IT SUGGESTS THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM IS KEEN TO BREAK A NEW FRANCO-GERMAN ALLIANCE ON STABILISERS, AND THAT ONE EFFECT OF YESTERDAY'S TALKS WILL BE A DEGREE OF GERMAN ISOLATION.

3. THE FIGARO LEADER NOTES THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WAS READING THE COHABITATION SIGNALS RIGHT IN SEEING CHIRAC NOT MITTERRAND, AGAIN NOTES THE AGREEMENT ON FUNDAMENTALS, BUT DRAWS ATTENTION TO DISAGREEMENT OVER DETAILS, INCLUDING REBASING THE GUIDELINE AND THE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES CLAUSE.

4. IN A BACK PAGE ARTICLE LA TRIBUNE DE L'ECONOMIE (FINANCIAL DAILY) RANGES WIDELY OVER THE SUBJECTS COVERED AT THE MEETING, NOTING THE SATISFACTION OF BOTH PRIME MINISTERS ON AMERICAN DECISIONS ON THE

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BUDGET DEFICIT, SIMILAR APPROACHES TO THE FORTHCOMING REAGAN/GORBACHEV SUMMIT AND TO THE IRAN-IRAQ CONFLICT, A WILLINGNESS ON BOTH SIDES TO REACH AGREEMENT AT COPENHAGEN, UNDERLINING THE CLOSE CO-OPERATION ON TERRORISM, AND NOTING THE AGREEMENT TO STUDY HOW TO DEVELOP YOUTH EXCHANGES.

5. COVERAGE IS LOWER-KEY IN OTHER PAPERS, AND MAINLY CONCENTRATES ON COMMUNITY ISSUES. LE MONDE NOTES IN A SHORT ACCOUNT THAT DIFFERENCES PERSIST OVER AGRICULTURE QUESTIONS. LIBERATION (LEFT-WING DAILY) NOTES THAT THE MEETING CLEARED AWAY SOME OF THE UNDERGROWTH BEFORE TODAY'S FAC AND THE COPENHAGEN SUMMIT. LES ECHOS (FINANCIAL DAILY) NOTES THE PRIME MINISTER'S DETERMINATION TO ENSURE BUDGETARY DISCIPLINE.

6. FCO ADVANCE TO ECD(I), WED, INGHAM (NO 10) LAVELLE, HOLROYD, BUDD (CABINET OFFICE), HADLEY (MAFF).

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