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## PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING ON 30 NOVEMBER WITH PRESIDENT MITTERRAND

## SUMMARY

1. MITTERRAND IN HIS SECOND TERM BECOMING MORE REMOTE FROM EVERYDAY PROBLEMS OF GOVERNMENT: CONTENT TO LEAVE ADMINISTRATION TO HIS MINISTERS AND CONCENTRATE ON BROAD FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. EAST/WEST RELATIONS AND GORBACHEV AT THE TOP OF HIS MIND. HE WANTS FRANCE TO PLAY A STRONGER ROLE HERE, NOT LEAST IN ARMS CONTROL. CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO MAKE HIS MARK ON HISTORY NEXT YEAR. HIS EC PRIORITIES: MONETARY, SOCIAL, AUDIOVISUAL. THOUGH HE WILL PROBABLY NOT WANT - OR BE ABLE TO - GO DEEP INTO THE DETAILED DOSSIERS, HE MAY BE ALIVE TO STAKING OUT COMMON GROUND ON WHICH TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL FRENCH PRESIDENCY.

## DETAIL

2. EARLY IN HIS SECOND SEVEN YEAR TERM, MITTERRAND IS SEEN BY THE FRENCH AS A MONARCHICAL FIGURE MORE AND MORE REMOTE FROM DAY TO DAY GOVERNMENTAL PROBLEMS. HE RESTS ON HIS LARGE POPULAR MANDATE. THE HARD EXPERIENCES OF THE THE EARLY 1980S HAVE ENCOURAGED HIM TO ADOPT A MORE HANDS OFF APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT, CONTINUING NOW THE PRACTICES WHICH WERE IMPOSED ON HIM BY COHABITATION WITH CHIRAC. MITTERRAND HANDS DOWN THE BROAD GUIDELINES, AS IN HIS 'LETTER TO THE FRENCH' AND SUBSEQUENT PRONOUNCEMENTS. IT IS FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW THEM THROUGH.

3. THIS REMOTENESS OR LACK OF CONTACT WITH EVERYDAY REALITIES OF FRENCH LIFE LEADS SOME TO QUESTION HOW FAR MITTERRAND IS ANY LONGER IN COMMAND OF IMPORTANT DOSSIERS, EG ON THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. HE HAS THE POWER, AND USES IT TO PLACE HIS ASSOCIATES IN KEY POSITIONS. HE HAS A BROAD VISION OF THE SORT OF EUROPE HE HOPES TO SEE EMERGE. BUT THERE IS NO SENSE THAT HE HAS A CLEAR SET OF SPECIFIC POLICY PRESCRIPTIONS OR VISION OF HOW TO REALISE THEM.

4. ONE EFFECT OF THIS UNCERTAINTY AT THE TOP IS THAT MITTERRAND NOW



CONCENTRATES MORE ON BROAD ISSUES OF FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENCE THAN IN THE EARLY YEARS OF HIS FIRST TERM. AGAIN THIS IS SOMETHING WHICH WAS FORCED ON HIM DURING COHABITATION. IT SUITS HIS TEMPERAMENT. EVEN IN THESE AREAS HE USES A PRETTY BROAD BRUSH. HE PROBABLY KEEPS A FIRMER PERSONAL HAND ON THE EAST/WEST RELATIONS ISSUES THAN ON THE EC DOSSIERS, WITH THEIR TECHNICAL CONTENT: AND GORBACHEV'S PROBLEMS WILL BE ON THE TOP OF HIS MIND. BUT ONE HAS THE IMPRESSION THAT MUCH IS LEFT TO HIS HIGHLY COMPETENT ADVISERS AT THE ELYSEE IN THE IMPLEMENTING AND EVEN MAKING OF POLICY ON THE BASIS OF MITTERRAND'S BROAD AND SOMETIMES DELPHIC PRONOUNCEMENTS. DUMAS, HIS OLD ASSOCIATE, CAN BE RELIED ON TO WORK COMPETENTLY WITHIN THE GUIDELINES LAID DOWN, AND TO KEEP THE FRANCO/GERMAN RELATIONSHIP WARM. MITTERRAND MAY WELL GIVE MORE SCOPE TO THE ACTIVE AND AMBITIOUS MME CRESSON, WHO IS CLOSE TO HIM, AS THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY APPROACHES. ROCARD'S INCURSIONS INTO FOREIGN POLICY HAVE BEEN INFREQUENT AND CONFINED TO SPECIFIC TOPICS: BUT HE IS A REAL PLAYER IN THOSE AREAS OF COMMUNITY POLICY, ESPECIALLY FISCAL, WHICH IMPINGE ON GOVERNMENT FINANCES.

5. INTERPRETING WHAT MAKES MITTERRAND TICK IS HAZARDOUS. HE IS FUNDAMENTALLY A POLITICAL ANIMAL, WHO ENJOYS POWER PARTLY FOR ITS OWN SAKE. HIS INSTINCTS ARE REPUBLICAN, OF THE BROAD LEFT BUT NO LONGER (IF EVEN) IDEOLOGICALLY SOCIALIST. HE BELIEVES IN ACTION TO PROMOTE SOCIAL SOLIDARITY, HELP FOR THE THIRD WORLD AND EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION. HE IS NOT A RADICAL BURNING TO CHANGE FRANCE. HE BELIEVES IN THE BIG THEMES OF EAST/WEST RELATIONS, ARMS CONTROL AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE IN THEIR OWN RIGHT BUT ALSO SEES THEM AS MEANS OF MOBILISING THE WIDEST POSSIBLE CONSTITUENCY ON THE LEFT AND CENTRE OF FRENCH POLICY. THEY ARE ELEMENTS OF INTERNAL FRENCH COHESION. THEY ARE ALSO (EUROPE AND EAST/WEST RELATIONS) TERRAIN FOR FRANCO/GERMAN ACTIVITY WHICH MITTERRAND SEES AS ESSENTIAL BOTH TO GENERATE PROGRESS IN EUROPEAN MATTERS AND (FOR FRANCE'S OWN REASONS) TO LOCK GERMANY INTO ITS WESTERN FRAMEWORK AND AVERT THE DISTURBING IF DISTANT PROSPECT OF GERMAN REUNIFICATION. THE FRANCO/GERMAN AXIS AND THE ASSUMPTION THAT ON MOST ISSUES THE GERMANS DO NOT WANT TO BE SEEN TO QUARREL WITH THE FRENCH IS THE BASIS FOR MAINTAINING FRANCE'S STATUS AND ITS GENERAL ROLE IN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS. HENCE MITTERRAND'S CLOSENESS TO KOHL.

6. ALTHOUGH HIS PERSONAL MANDATE IS FOR A FURTHER SEVEN YEARS, MITTERRAND NEEDS A POLITICAL BASE, AND LOOK FIRST TO THE SOCIALISTS AND THEN TO THE CENTRE TO PROVIDE THIS. FOR THE TIME BEING, THE OPENING OF THE CENTRE FOR WHICH HE WAS LOOKING EARLIER THIS YEAR IS IN SUSPENSE. IT COULD BE REVIVED AT THE TIME OF THE EUROPEAN



ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR. IT IS A MEANS OF KEEPING THE CENTRE IN PLAY SO AS TO FRACTURE THE RIGHT, AS EARLIER MITTERRAND BROKE THE COMMUNISTS. IN THE MEANTIME THE THEMES CHOSEN BY MITTERRAND AS HIS FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES ARE THEMES ROUND WHICH ALL THOSE ON THE CENTRE AND LEFT CAN RALLY, AND MITTERRAND HOPES THEY WILL PROVIDE SOME SUBSTITUTE FOR THE OVERALL POLITICAL VIEW OR STRATEGY WHICH ROCARD'S GOVERNMENT IS ACCUSED BY ITS OPPONENTS (MAINLY ON THE LEFT) OF LACKING.

7. FRANCE'S SPECIAL POSITION AND HER NATIONAL CONSENSUS ON DEFENCE IS A FURTHER ELEMENT OF SOCIAL COHESION, HELPING TO BIND THE LEFT AND THE COMMUNIST INTO A SET OF ASSUMPTIONS (NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, DISTRUST OF UNITED STATES' LEADERSHIP AND FEAR OF US WITHDRAWAL, IMPORTANCE OF NUCLEAR CAPACITY FOR DEFENCE AND CIVIL USE ETC) WHICH THE RIGHT, WITH THEIR GAULLIST INHERITANCE, CAN HARDLY QUESTION. THOUGH UNDER MITTERRAND THERE HAS BEEN REAL PRACTICAL RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN FRANCE AND NATO, AND ALSO IN OUR BILATERAL DEFENCE COOPERATION, IT REMAINS DOGMA ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM THAT FRANCE CANNOT RE-ENTER THE INTEGRATED MILITARY STRUCTURE. BUT EVEN AGAINST THIS LIMITING BACKGROUND THERE IS SCOPE FOR FURTHER COOPERATION.

8. THIS IS THE BACKGROUND AGAINST WHICH MITTERRAND WILL PERFORM ON 30 NOVEMBER. IF FOLLOWS THAT I WOULD EXPECT HIM TO WANT A BROAD-BRUSH DISCUSSION OF EAST/WEST RELATIONS AND THE COMMUNITY - PLUS PERHAPS THE MIDDLE EAST - AND TO WISH TO AVOID TOO MUCH DETAIL. NEVERTHELESS FOR ALL HIS REMOTENESS, HE IS THE MAN WHOSE WORD WILL COUNT WHEN IT COMES TO SHAPING OR RESHAPING FRANCE'S POLICIES FOR 1989.

#### EAST/WEST RELATIONS

9. THE PRIME MOTIVE BEHIND MITTERRAND'S RE-LAUNCHING OF FRANCE'S POLICY TOWARDS THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE IS TO RESTORE FRANCE'S POSITION AS A LEADING PLAYER IN THIS CRUCIAL AREA AFTER THE COHABITATION YEARS. THE CHANGE OF US PRESIDENT ENLARGES THE OPPORTUNITY. THERE IS A CONVICTION THAT NOW, WITH THE KALEIDOSCOPE SHIFTING, IS THE TIME FOR AN ACTIVE POLITICAL DIALOGUE: A DETERMINATION THAT FRANCE SHOULD DO BETTER IN EASTERN MARKETS: SOME JEALOUSY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM'S ROLE (THOUGH IN HIS 'LIBERATION' INTERVIEW ON 23 NOVEMBER MITTERRAND SPOKE WARMLY OF MRS THATCHER'S VISIT TO POLAND): MORE FUNDAMENTALLY A DESIRE TO GET BACK INTO THE ACT HIMSELF. APART FROM HIS VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION THIS WEEK, MITTERRAND WILL BE MAKING VISITS TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA (DECEMBER): BULGARIA (JANUARY): AND HUNGARY, THE GDR AND EVENTUALLY POLAND. AND CROZ WAS IN PARIS 10 DAYS AGO.



10. MITTERRAND'S APPROACH TO ARMS CONTROL RESTS ON A DETERMINATION TO PRESERVE FRANCE'S NUCLEAR DETERRENT FROM THE EFFECTS OF ARMS CONTROL. BUT HE WANTS FRANCE TO PLAY MORE OF A ROLE IN THE CHEMICAL AND CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS (A POINT THAT CAN BE USED TO TEST THE FRENCH BLOCKAGE IN THE CST AUTONOMY.) HIS PERCEPTION OF KOHL'S POSITION IS THE KEY TO HIS ATTITUDE TO SNF MODERNISATION AND SNF NEGOTIATIONS.

#### THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

11. MITTERRAND MAY WANT TO TOUCH ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AT RHODES, AND WILL BE PREPARED FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO RAISE THE GATT MID-TERM MEETING IN MONTREAL, BUT IS UNLIKELY TO WANT TO GO INTO DETAIL. HE IS MORE LIKELY TO COVER, PROBABLY IN GENERAL TERMS, THE ISSUES ON WHICH HE WILL WANT TO SEE PROGRESS OVER THE NEXT YEAR, PARTICULARLY DURING THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY, IE MONETARY COOPERATION, THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF THE SINGLE MARKET AND AUDIOVISUAL QUESTIONS. THESE WERE THE THREE MAIN OBJECTIVES HE SPECIFIED IN HIS INTERVIEW ON 23 NOVEMBER.

12. MITTERRAND IS DETERMINED THAT THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY SHOULD MARK A FIRM STEP FORWARD IN EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION AND SEES THESE THREE ISSUES, PARTICULARLY MONETARY CONSTRUCTION, AS THE MOST SUITABLE CANDIDATES FOR TREATMENT. BRITAIN IS SEEN IN SOME QUARTERS HERE AS A POTENTIAL STUMBLING-BLOCK TO SUCH PROGRESS, AND WE ARE NOW BEGINNING TO HEAR THE FAMILIAR SUGGESTIONS OF A TWO-SPEED EUROPE, WITH BRITAIN IN THE SLOW LANE. MITTERRAND MAY FROM TIME TO TIME BE TEMPTED BY THIS (WHATEVER IT MAY MEAN IN PRACTICE) AND MAY SEE SOME TACTICAL MILEAGE IN FLOATING IT OR ALLOWING OTHERS TO FLOAT IT. AND THE RISK OF SOME FURTHER FRANCO/GERMAN GET TOGETHER, AS AT MILAN IN 1985, CANNOT BE ENTIRELY RULED OUT. AT HEART, HOWEVER, MITTERRAND WILL WANT TO SEE THE COMMUNITY PULL TOGETHER NOT APART DURING THE NEXT YEAR, AND WILL AIM TO ACHIEVE THAT IN THE RUN UP TO AND DURING THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY. I DO NOT THINK HE DOUBTS THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM TO ACHIEVE THIS: AND I NOTE THE CARE HE TOOK IN HIS LIBERATION INTERVIEW TO RESPECT BRITAIN'S AND THE PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION ON IMPORTANT ISSUES, WHILE NOT DISGUIISING DIVERGENT AIMS ON COMMUNITY MATTERS. (ON THE EC: 'WE HAVE, WITH THE BRITISH, OVERCOME PLENTY OF OBSTACLES. THAT'S WHY WE MUST THRASH OUT THESE QUESTIONS. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO DO SO.' ON ARAB/ISRAEL: 'COUNTRIES WITH AN OLD AND SOLID EXPERIENCE, SUCH AS BRITAIN AND FRANCE', MUST HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN A PEACE CONFERENCE. AND ON SNF MODERNISATION AND LINKAGE WITH CST, THIS TIME NO WORD EXCLAM).

13. FCO PLEASE ADVANCE TO POWELL AT NO 10 DOWNING STREET.

FERGUSSON

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