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CHANCELLOR KOHL'S MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER ON 2 FEBRUARY:
KOHL'S OPTIONS

SUMMARY

1. THERE IS NO EASY WAY OUT FOR KOHL. OF HIS OPTIONS AT THIS STAGE, WORKING GENUINELY FOR AN HONEST DEAL INCLUDING RATHER THAN ISOLATING THE UK, SEEMS BEST FOR HIM, AS WELL AS IN CHARACTER. THE CONCLAVE LOOKS UNLIKELY TO PROVIDE HIM WITH READY MADE ANSWERS. HIS VISIT TO LONDON WELL TIMED TO INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION HE TAKES.

DETAIL

2. IN THE RUN UP TO THE BRUSSELS SUMMIT, KOHL FACES A MESSY SITUATION WITH NO OBVIOUS COST-FREE WAY OUT. HE ALMOST CERTAINLY HAS AS YET NO GAME PLAN. HE WILL COME TO LONDON CONCIOUS OF THE HUGE ADVANTAGE TO HIM OF HAVING A SUCCESS AT BRUSSELS FOR WHICH HE CAN TAKE CREDIT. (HE COULD CERTAINLY DO WITH A SUCCESS OF SOME KIND BECAUSE HE IS BEING CRITICISED EVEN WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY FOR LACK OF LEADERSHIP, NO CLEAR LINE ETC.) HIS PROBLEM IS THAT AS THINGS STAND NOW - AND THIS IS BEGINNING TO BE UNDERSTOOD HERE - SUCCESS SEEMS UNOBTAINABLE EXCEPT ON CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD INVOLVE MODIFICATIONS OF THE PACKAGE KIECHLE CLAIMS TO HAVE PUT TOGETHER IN THE LAST MONTH. IT WOULD CALL FOR A MAJOR ACT OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL LEADERSHIP ON KOHL'S PART FOR HIM TO TAKE ON AND/OR WIN OVER COALITION PARTNERS AND THE RURAL LOBBY. IT IS A BAD SIGN THAT THE GROUND FOR THIS HAS SIMPLY NOT BEEN PREPARED. SO WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES?

3. ISOLATING AN UNCO-OPERATIVE AND UNREASONABLE UK IS A TEMPTING OPTION. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, DIFFICULTIES. ISOLATING THE UK WOULD REQUIRE PICKING OFF THE DUTCH AND SHIFTING THE COMMISSION, WHICH IN TURN WOULD FMIOOHK

SSLADHJUMRTICAL SKILL AND CUNNING THAN I THINK IS IN KOHL'S NATURE. JUST AS BAD, FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW, IS THE FACT THAT SEGMENTS OF THE GERMAN PRESS, INCLUDING SUCH QUALITY PAPERS AS THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE AND HANDELSBLATT, HAVE BEGUN TO SEE THE MERITS OF THE UK POSITION ON AGRICULTURE AND THE DEMERITS OF

THE GERMAN. THE IDEA, PLAUSIBLY SAID TO HAVE ORIGINATED WITH GENSCHER, THAT THE UK CAN BE BROUGHT IN LINE BY A TRADE-OFF BETWEEN CAP COSTS AND CONCESSIONS ON THE UK REBATE, HAS BEEN ASSESSED BY SOME COMMENTATORS AS A BLUFF THAT WILL NOT SUCCEED.

4. DELAY - A FAVOURITE WITH KOHL, ADOPTED AT COPENHAGEN - IS THE OTHER POSSIBILITY. BUT EVEN IF ONE OR MORE PARTNER GOT THE BLAME FOR PUTTING OFF DECISIONS, THIS WOULD MEAN A MUCH MORE DIFFICULT AND UNPLEASANT GERMAN PRESIDENCY. KOHL MUST ALSO REALISE THAT ON THIS OCCASION THE PASSAGE OF TIME CANNOT BE GUARANTEED TO MAKE THINGS ANY EASIER DOMESTICALLY. ALL THE RELEVANT ELEMENTS TO A SOLUTION, INCLUDING SET-ASIDE, ARE NOW ON THE TABLE IN BRUSSELS. THERE CAN BE LITTLE, IF ANYTHING TO ADD. AND IN THE CAMPAIGNS PRECEDING THE TWO LAND ELECTIONS OF MARCH AND MAY, THE RURAL LOBBY WILL BE VERY ACTIVE BOXING THE GOVERNMENT IN.

5. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, SINCE NEITHER SHIFTING THE BLAME NOR POSTPONEMENT LOOKS ESPECIALLY PROMISING, KOHL WILL, AT LEAST AT THIS STAGE OF THE GAME, BE WORKING FOR SUCCESS DESPITE ALL THE DIFFICULTIES THIS WILL INVOLVE FOR HIM. THIS IS THE HONEST APPROACH WHICH HE WOULD NATURALLY PREFER, AND IT IS REFLECTED IN THE REASONABLY STRAIGHTFORWARD WAY IN WHICH GENSCHER HAS PREPARED FOR THE CONCLAVE. KOHL KNOWS, HOWEVER EVEN IF HE HAS NOT GRASPED ALL THE DETAIL, THAT PRESENT UK AND GERMAN POSITIONS ARE INCOMPATIBLE. I WOULD EXPECT HIM, BY ACTIVITY ESPECIALLY IN PARIS, LONDON AND BRUSSELS, TO BE TRYING TO FIND HIS WAY FORWARD SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE COPENHAGEN PACKAGE, WHICH HE DECLARED AN UNACCEPTABLE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION, AND THE KIECHLE PACKAGE, WHICH HAS NOT WON COMMISSION ENDORSEMENT. THOUGH LATE IN THE DAY, THE EVIDENCE IS THAT KOHL HAS AT LAST BEGUN TO FOCUS ON THE ISSUES. WITH THE PRIME MINISTER I WOULD EXPECT HIM THEREFORE TO TRY TO DO RATHER MORE THAN JUST TOUCH BASE FOR THE SAKE OF PUBLIC APPEARANCES. HE MAY ARGUE TO HER AS KITTEL (KIECHLE'S DEPUTY) DID TO ME OVER THE WEEKEND, WITH FIGURES, THAT THE GAP WHICH WE SEE BETWEEN EFFECTIVE STABILISERS AND COSMETIC PALLIATIVES IS NOT REALLY SO WIDE OR SO ABSOLUTE.

6. THE DANGER FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW IS THAT KOHL WILL GIVE UP ON THE UNITED KINGDOM FIRST. AN IMPORTANT TACTICAL OBJECTIVE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WILL THEREFORE BE TO KEEP THE GAME GOING WITH KOHL UNTIL THE SUMMIT ITSELF.

7. THE TIMING OF THE MEETING, AFTER THE CONCLAVE HAS BEGUN AND BEFORE IT HAS ENDED, IS NOT IDEAL. BUT WHAT TRANSPIRES BETWEEN KOHL AND THE PRIME MINISTER WILL FORM THE IMMEDIATE BACKDROP AGAINST

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WHICH WE WILL HEAR GENSCHER'S REPORT OF THE CONCLAVE: WE STILL THEREFORE HAVE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE THE WAY HE GOES ABOUT HIS TASK.

8. AT THE OPENING OF GREEN WEEK IN BERLIN ON 28-29 JANUARY I WAS STRUCK BY THE WAY IN WHICH ALL SPEAKERS, INCLUDING ANDRIESSEN BUT ESPECIALLY KIECHLE AND EVEN THE GERMAN FARMERS' LEADER HEEREMAN, HAD MODERATED THEIR TONE AND LANGUAGE COMPARED WITH PREVIOUS YEARS. IT WAS AS IF THE WORD HAD GONE OUT FROM BONN THAT NOTHING MUST BE SAID IN BERLIN TO DAMAGE THE PROSPECTS OF AGREEMENT AT BRUSSELS. THIS WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH KOHL'S FRAME OF MIND PAINTED ABOVE.

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