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WELLINGTON FOR LORD GLENARTHUR.

THE NEW FRENCH GOVERNMENT.

SUMMARY

1. THE NEW GOVERNMENT SIGNALS MITTERRAND'S WISH FOR AN OPENING TO THE CENTRE, BUT LESS CLEARLY THAN HE MIGHT HAVE LIKED. JOSPIN IS REWARDED WITH EDUCATION AND RESEARCH, TWO OF MITTERRAND'S PRIORITIES. DUMAS GOES BACK TO THE QUAI, BEREGOVY TO FINANCE, JOXE TO INTERIOR AND NALLET TO AGRICULTURE. MME CRESSON, A MITTERRAND ALLY, GETS EUROPE. THE LEFT WING CHEVENEMENT'S APPOINTMENT TO DEFENCE IS UNLIKELY TO BE POPULAR WITH THE MILITARY. HOW LONG THE GOVERNMENT LASTS, AND WHETHER THERE ARE EARLY LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS, MAY DEPEND ON THE RECEPTION IT GETS FROM THE CENTRE-RIGHT.

DETAIL

2. ROCARD'S GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN LONGER TO ANNOUNCE THAN EXPECTED. THERE SEEM TO HAVE BEEN TWO REASONS FOR THE DELAY. THE FIRST IS THAT A FIERCE BATTLE HAS DEVELOPED IN THE PAST 2-3 DAYS BETWEEN FABIUS AND MAUROY OVER WHICH OF THEM SHOULD SUCCEED JOSPIN AS FIRST SECRETARY OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY (PS). THE OUTCOME IS NOT YET CLEAR, ALTHOUGH THE PS IS EXPECTED TO DECIDE THIS WEEKEND.

3. THE SECOND DIFFICULTY APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF MOST LEADING CENTRE-RIGHT POLITICIANS TO JOIN THE GOVERNMENT SO SOON AFTER THE RIGHT'S PRESIDENTIAL DEFEAT, DESPITE RUMOURS THAT MITTERRAND HAS BEEN KEEN FOR SOME OF THEM TO DO SO. THEY ARE SAID TO HAVE REFUSED HIS OVERTURES ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY DO NOT YET KNOW WHAT POLICIES THE ROCARD GOVERNMENT WILL FOLLOW. THEY ARE ALSO NERVOUS THAT MITTERRAND MAY DISSOLVE THE ASSEMBLY IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, WHICH WOULD LEAVE THEM IN CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL DIFFICULTY SINCE THEY WOULD HAVE ABANDONED THEIR RIGHT WING ALLIANCES WITHOUT HAVING HAD TIME TO BUILD SUBSTANTIAL LINKS WITH THEIR NEW SOCIALIST ALLIES.

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4. THE NEW GOVERNMENT NEVERTHELESS INCLUDES A FEW NON-SOCIALIST FIGURES AS EVIDENCE OF MITTERRAND'S COMMITMENT TO AN OPENING TO THE CENTRE. FAURE (ONE OF THE FOUR SENIOR MINISTRES D'ETAT) IS A RADICAL. HE IS ALSO A LONG-TIME INTIMATE OF MITTERRAND AND MAY NOW PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE PRESIDENT'S ATTEMPTS TO FORGE AN ALLIANCE WITH THE CENTRE AND CENTRE-RIGHT. THE NEW MINISTER OF JUSTICE, ARPAILLANGE, IS NOT A SOCIALIST EITHER, BUT A JURIST WITH A REPUTATION FOR PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE AND FOR RESISTING POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THE JUDICIARY (A COMMON PHENOMENON IN FRANCE). FAUROUX, WHO GOES TO THE IMPORTANT MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, TRADE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY DIRECTOR OF ENA, AND IS FROM THE CATHOLIC CENTRE. DURAFOUR, CURIEN, DOUBIN AND MME TASCA ARE NON-SOCIALISTS TOO (DURAFOUR WAS A MINISTER UNDER GISCARD AND CURIEN, ALTHOUGH A MINISTER IN FABIOUS' GOVERNMENT, IS A SCIENTIST NOT A PROFESSIONAL POLITICIAN.) ALTHOUGH THE RPR AND PARTI REPUBLICAIN HAVE BEEN QUICK TO CONDEMN THE LINE-UP AS EVIDENCE THAT MITTERRAND'S PROFESSED DESIRE FOR AN OPENING TO THE CENTRE IS A POLITICAL FICTION, THE SIGNS ARE THERE FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO SEE, EVEN IF THEY MAY BE LESS STRIKING THAN MITTERRAND AND ROCARD MIGHT HAVE LIKED.

5. THE OTHER MINISTRIES HAVE GONE LARGELY TO SOCIALIST HEAVYWEIGHTS WHO PLAYED IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT AND PARTY ROLES DURING MITTERRAND'S FIRST TERM. THE NOMINATION OF JOSPIN AS THE SECOND MINISTER IN THE GOVERNMENT AFTER ROCARD IS A STRIKING REWARD FOR HIS SEVEN YEAR TERM AS FIRST SECRETARY OF THE PARTY. HE HAS NOW BEEN GIVEN CHARGE OF TWO OF THE AREAS WHICH MITTERRAND HAS SAID WILL BE AMONG HIS PRIORITIES IN HIS NEW TERM: EDUCATION AND RESEARCH. BEREGOVY'S RETURN TO THE ECONOMY AND FINANCE IS NO SURPRISE. HE PROVED A SUCCESSFUL FINANCE MINISTER UNDER FABIOUS AND HIS REAPPOINTMENT WILL REASSURE THE BOURSE AND FINANCIAL CIRCLES.

6. DUMAS' RETURN TO THE QUAI AS MINISTRE D'ETAT IS A REWARD FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS A GOOD TRACK RECORD IN THE JOB BUT WHO HAS NOT BEEN SHORT-LISTED IN RECENT SPECULATION. THE FACT THAT MITTERRAND HAS PUT HIM BACK IN CHARGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND HAS MADE ANOTHER OF HIS MOST TRUSTED INTIMATES, MME CRESSON, MINISTER FOR EUROPE, SUGGESTS THAT THE PRESIDENT IS DETERMINED TO KEEP A FIRM GRIP ON FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN POLICY AND THAT MATIGNON MAY HAVE TO STRUGGLE TO MAKE ITS VOICE HEARD.

7. JOXE'S REAPPOINTMENT TO THE INTERIOR MINISTRY PUTS ANOTHER MITTERRAND TRUSTEE BACK IN A KEY MINISTRY, AND ONE THAT WILL BE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN THE COMING MONTHS GIVEN ITS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ELECTIONS. THE RIGHT DETEST HIM, CLAIMING THAT HE IS SECTARIAN

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AND DOCTRINAIRE, AND THEY WILL CERTAINLY POINT TO HIS RETURN TO BOLSTER THEIR CLAIM THAT MITTERRAND IS NOT GENUINELY INTERESTED IN OPENING TO THE CENTRE. THEY WILL CITE THE MERMAZ AND POPEREN APPOINTMENTS AS FURTHER PROOF, ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY TOO ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE LEFT WING OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY.

8. SO IS CHEVENEMENT, WHOSE APPOINTMENT TO DEFENCE IS UNLIKELY TO BE WELCOMED BY THE MILITARY. HIS REPUTATION FOR NATIONALISM (HE IS KNOWN AS A LEFT WING GAULLIST) IS UNLIKELY TO OFFSET THEIR DOUBTS ABOUT HIM AS THE LEADER OF A LEFT WING GINGER GROUP THAT ESPOUSES MARXIST ECONOMICS. NEVERTHELESS THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT HIS INTELLIGENCE, THE FORCEFULNESS OF HIS PERSONALITY, NOR HIS COMPETENCE AS A DEPARTMENTAL MINISTER. BY CHOOSING HIM, MITTERRAND APPEARS TO BE SIGNALLING TO THE LEFT OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY THAT, ALTHOUGH HE IS PURSUING AN OPENING TO THE CENTRE, HE IS SERIOUS IN HIS DETERMINATION TO MAKE DISARMAMENT A PRIORITY IN HIS NEW TERM.

9. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DOM-TOMS AND THEREFORE FOR THE DIFFICULT NEW CALEDONIA DOSSIER STAYS AT MATIGNON, WITH STIRN THE JUNIOR MINISTER WORKING TO ROCARD. (STIRN'S APPOINTMENT IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF MITTERRAND'S OPENING TO THE CENTRE: HE IS A CENTRIST WHO CONVERTED TO SOCIALISM DURING MITTERRAND'S FIRST TERM.) NEW CALEDONIA IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT ISSUES FACING THE NEW GOVERNMENT AND ITS HANDLING WILL COUNT CRUCIALLY IN DETERMINING THE PUBLIC VIEW OF ROCARD'S ADMINISTRATION. SOCIAL AFFAIRS WILL SIMILARLY BE OF GREAT SENSITIVITY. IT COMES AS NO SURPRISE THAT DELEBARRE HAS BEEN CHOSEN FOR THE POST. HE WAS A CONSPICUOUS SUCCESS AS MINISTER OF LABOUR IN THE FABIUS GOVERNMENT AND IS A RISING STAR.

10. MY INITIAL IMPRESSION IS THAT THIS IS A GOVERNMENT THAT WE SHOULD FIND IT RELATIVELY EASY TO DO BUSINESS WITH. ROCARD IS WELL DISPOSED, AND DUMAS WAS SOMEONE WITH WHOM WE COULD WORK EFFECTIVELY DURING THE FABIUS PERIOD. I BELIEVE THAT THE HOME SECRETARY ALSO HAD GOOD WORKING RELATIONS WITH JOXE. CHEVENEMENT WILL BE A SHARP CHANGE AT DEFENCE: FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW HE KNOWS THE UK (AND SPEAKS GOOD ENGLISH). (WASHINGTON MAY HOWEVER BE UNEASY: CHEVENEMENT HAS HAD HARD THINGS TO SAY ABOUT THE UNITED STATES IN THE PAST.) BEREGOVY HAS BEEN COMPENSATED FOR HIS WORK IN THE CAMPAIGN, AND FOR MISSING THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP, BY A POSITION AS NUMBER THREE. HIS RETURN AND THAT OF NALLET MEAN FAMILIAR AND SENSIBLE FACES IN THE KEY MINISTRIES OF FINANCE AND AGRICULTURE.

11. NEITHER MME CRESSON, NOR MME AVICE HAVE DIRECT FOREIGN POLICY EXPERIENCE (ALTHOUGH MME CRESSON WAS FABIUS' MINISTER FOR TRADE) AND

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WE SHALL NEED TO MAKE EARLY CONTACT. IT WILL BE WORTH TAKING PARTICULAR TROUBLE OVER MME CRESSON SINCE SHE IS PARTICULARLY CLOSE TO MITTERRAND. MME AVICE HAS BEEN A DEPUTY FOR PARIS SINCE 1978, AND HAS RECENTLY WORKED WITHIN THE PS ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS. SHE BELONGS TO A LEFT WING STRAND OF THE PARTY.

CONCLUSION

12. THIS IS PROBABLY NOT THE GOVERNMENT MITTERRAND WOULD IDEALLY HAVE LIKED TO FORM. IT DEMONSTRATES HIS DESIRE TO KEEP AN OPENING TO THE CENTRE BUT, APART FROM FAURE, CONTAINS NO CENTRISTS OR RADICALS OF NATIONAL STATURE. BUT IT LEAVES HIS OPTIONS OPEN.

13. MITTERRAND WILL NOW WATCH TO SEE HOW THE CENTRE-RIGHT REACT. THEIR RESPONSE WILL HELP TO DETERMINE WHETHER HIS HOPE OF CONSTRUCTING A CENTRE-LEFT GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO BE PRACTICAL POLITICS IN THE MONTHS AHEAD, OR WHETHER HE WILL HAVE TO ABANDON THE IDEA, ANYWAY IN THE SHORT TERM. IF THEIR REACTION IS POSITIVE, HE IS UNLIKELY TO DISSOLVE THE ASSEMBLY IMMEDIATELY (IE IN JUNE). HE MAY HOPE THAT BY SEPTEMBER THE TIMING WILL BE MORE FRUITFUL. IF IT IS NEGATIVE, THE ODDS WILL SHORTEN ON EARLY DISSOLUTION AND JUNE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. HE IS UNLIKELY TO WANT TO BE TIED DOWN BY A CLEAR SOCIALIST MAJORITY, BUT THAT MAY BE HIS ONLY CHOICE IF HE SEES A DIMINISHING PROSPECT OF BRINGING THE CENTRE-RIGHT ON BOARD.

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