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ANGLO-GERMAN SUMMIT: FRANKFURT: 20-21 FEBRUARY.

SUMMARY

1. A SUCCESSFUL SUMMIT, WHICH DISPLAYED IN PUBLIC THE STRENGTH AND COHESIVENESS OF THE UK/FRG RELATIONSHIP. IN PRIVATE, BUSINESSLIKE TONE AND LARGE MEASURE OF AGREEMENT. IN PUBLIC, BOTH SIDES ACCENTUATED THE POSITIVE. REFUSAL TO GO BEYOND AGREED LINE ON SNF.

DETAIL

2. THIS FIRST FORMAL ANGLO-GERMAN SUMMIT SINCE SEPTEMBER 1986 WAS ATTENDED BY AN ARRAY OF MINISTERS ON BOTH SIDES: IN ADDITION TO HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE, HOME AFFAIRS, AGRICULTURE AND TRADE/INDUSTRY. MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE FIRST DAY, INCLUDING THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE BUNDESBANK AND HER TOUR OF THE SIGHTS OF CENTRAL FRANKFURT, WAS PROMINENT, EXTENSIVE AND FAVOURABLE. THERE WERE ONLY MINOR DEMONSTRATIONS (ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND) WHICH CAUSED NO BOTHER.

3. IN THE PLENARY SESSION AND AGAIN IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE KOHL SPOKE WARMLY OF THE SOLID BASIS OF FRIENDSHIP, MUTUAL CONFIDENCE AND RELIABILITY UNDERPINNING THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP AND PRAISED THE ROLE PLAYED BY BRITISH SERVICEMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES IN THE FRG IN THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE AND FREEDOM. THE PRIME MINISTER PAID TRIBUTE TO THE SIMILARITY OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS, NOTING THAT DESPITE SOME DIFFERENCES THEY WERE BOTH ABSOLUTELY FIRM ON THE ESSENTIALS.

4. THE PRIME MINISTER MADE FULL USE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO PUT BRITISH VIEWS ON SNF FIRMLY TO KOHL, WHO HAS BEEN WAVERING AT A CRUCIAL MOMENT IN THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO A DECISION. THE EFFORT CAN BE RESUMED WHEN THE TWO HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEET AT KOHL'S HOME IN LATE APRIL, NOT LONG BEFORE THE NATO SUMMIT. THE PRIME MINISTER AND KOHL AGREED TO USE IN PUBLIC THE LINE IN MIFT. DESPITE REPEATED NEEDLING AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE, THEY REFUSED TO GO BEYOND IT. THAT WILL HAVE SHOWN THAT, EVEN WHERE WE AND THE GERMANS ARE KNOWN TO HAVE DIFFERENCES, THE TWO SIDES ARE DETERMINED

TO AVOID RECRIMINATION AND TO REACH AGREEMENT THROUGH PRIVATE DISCUSSION.

5. THE TALKS, OF WHICH RECORDS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED IN LONDON, WERE BUSINESSLIKE AND COVERED A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS. THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF AGREEMENT, BUT ALSO SOME PREDICTABLE DIFFERENCES, FOR INSTANCE ON AGRICULTURE AND ON HARMONISATION OF TAXATION IN THE EC.

6. THIS SUMMIT WILL HAVE REMINDED THE GERMAN PUBLIC OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BRITISH/GERMAN RELATIONS. THAT CAN HELP US TO EXERT INFLUENCE IN THE MANY MATTERS WHERE GERMANY PLAYS A KEY ROLE. THE NEXT SUMMIT WILL BE IN THE UK IN MARCH 1990, TO COINCIDE WITH THE 40TH KOENIGSWINTER CONFERENCE. IT IS GOOD THAT THE RHYTHM OF THESE SUMMITS HAS BEEN RE-ESTABLISHED AFTER A LONG GAP.

MALLABY

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