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TELNO 655

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MY TELNO 653 (NOT TO ALL): PRESIDENT MITTERRAND'S PRESS CONFERENCE
: EAST/WEST AND DEFENCE ISSUES

SUMMARY

1. MITTERRAND WISHES GORBACHEV SUCCESS, BUT SAYS WEST SHOULD NOT GO TOO FAST OR DISMANTLE DEFENCES. CONFIRMATION OF JUNE VISIT TO POLAND AND VISIT BEFORE END OF YEAR TO GDR. ALL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES SHOULD MULTIPLY CONTACTS AND OPEN DOORS: OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO BERLIN WALL. 1991 AND 1992 DEFENCE BUDGETS LIKELY TO GROW IN CASH TERMS, BUT NO MORE REAL INCREASES.

DETAIL

2. MY TELNO 648 REPORTED PRESIDENT MITTERRAND'S REMARKS ON SNF. THESE CONCENTRATED ON MODERNISATION RATHER THAN ON NEGOTIATIONS. SOME SECTIONS OF THE FRENCH PRESS HAVE SEEN HIS WILLINGNESS TO SEE NATO DELAY MODERNISATION DECISIONS AS SIDING WITH THE FRG. BUT THE BBC AND THE TIMES ARE RIGHT TO STRESS HIS IMPLICIT OPPOSITION TO IMMEDIATE OR EARLY NEGOTIATIONS ON SNF. MITTERRAND REPEATED THAT THE WEST SHOULD GIVE PRIORITY TO THE CFE TALKS AND IMPLIED THAT WE SHOULD NOT LOOK AT THE QUESTION OF AN SNF NEGOTIATION UNTIL ABOUT 1992. GENSCHER (WHO WAS DUE TO SEE MITTERRAND AFTER THE PRESS CONFERENCE) MAY TAKE COMFORT FROM A REFERENCE IN MITTERRAND'S GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE NEED FOR THE WEST ALWAYS TO SHOW ITSELF READY TO NEGOTIATE AND TALK ABOUT DISARMAMENT. BUT IT WAS INTERESTING THAT MITTERRAND SHOULD HAVE DECIDED EXPLICITLY TO OPPOSE A THIRD ZERO (THOUGH THAT DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT THE FRENCH WILL INSIST ON THIS BEING AN ELEMENT IN THE NATO SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE).

3. ON EAST/WEST RELATIONS, MITTERRAND AGREED THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOVIET UNION HAD CHANGED THE QUALITY OF FRANCO-SOVIET RELATIONS. HE WISHED GORBACHEV SUCCESS: THERE HAD BEEN PROGRESS ON DISARMAMENT AND A CERTAIN SOVIET MILITARY DISENGAGEMENT. CONFIDENCE HAD GROWN AND THE DIALOGUE DEEPENED. BUT WE SHOULD NOT GO TOO FAST AND SHOULD NOT DISMANTLE OUR SECURITY ARSENALS.

4. MITTERRAND CONFIRMED THAT HE WOULD VISIT POLAND IN MID-JUNE AND SPOKE ABOUT FRANCO-POLISH FRIENDSHIP. HE MENTIONED HIS CONTACTS WITH GORBACHEV AND HIS RECENT VISITS TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND BULGARIA. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD VISIT THE GDR BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR. HE SAID THAT THE EC WAS NOT THE WHOLE OF EUROPE AND THAT THE EC SHOULD MULTIPLY ITS CONTACTS AND AGREEMENTS WITH OTHERS EG THE SO-CALLED EAST EUROPEANS. AS MANY DOORS AND WINDOWS SHOULD BE OPENED AS FAR AS POSSIBLE: THIS WAS DIFFICULT WHEN WE WERE DIVIDED BY A WALL ETC.

5. MITTERRAND TWICE SAID THAT THE BUILDING-UP OF A POLITICAL EUROPE SHOULD LEAD TO A EUROPEAN DEFENCE SYSTEM (UNDEFINED). HE DID NOT MENTION THE WEU.

DEFENCE BUDGET

6. MITTERRAND SAID THAT THE QUESTION WAS ONE OF REDUCING THE PLANNED RATE OF GROWTH. A STRONG FRANCE NEEDED A HEALTHY ECONOMY: THERE WERE OTHER BUDGETARY PRIORITIES (EDUCATION, RESEARCH, ETC) AND IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE AT A LOWER COST TO PRESERVE FRANCE'S NUCLEAR DETERRENT, TO LOOK AFTER THE FRENCH DEFENCE INDUSTRY AND MORALE IN THE SERVICES.

7. MITTERRAND SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT 40 TO 45 BILLION FRANCS COULD BE SHAVED FROM THE 470-474 BILLION FRANCS FOR THE FOUR YEARS 1990 TO 1993. MORE IMMEDIATELY, 16 TO 18 BILLION FRANCS COULD BE SHAVED FROM THE 1991 AND 1992 BUDGETS. MITTERRAND SAID THAT MAJOR PROGRAMMES WOULD BE PRESERVED, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS AT DIFFERENT RHYTHMS. IT WAS PERHAPS SIGNIFICANT THAT HE DID NOT LIST THE S4 MISSILE PROGRAMME (DUE TO REPLACE THE PLATEAU D'ALBION IRBMS BUT ABOUT WHICH MITTERRAND HAS LONG VOICED SCEPTICISM). MITTERRAND MADE NO EFFORT TO SUGGEST THAT THE ENDING OF GROWTH IN THE FRENCH DEFENCE BUDGET WAS DUE TO A REDUCED SOVIET THREAT: HE SET IT PURELY IN THE CONTEXT OF OTHER DOMESTIC PRIORITIES.

NUCLEAR TESTS/ARMS CONTROL

8. MITTERRAND SAID THAT FRANCE WOULD NOT STOP NUCLEAR TESTING SO LONG AS THE OTHER NUCLEAR POWERS CONTINUED THEIR TESTS. TESTING WAS NECESSARY FOR DETERRENCE. HE REITERATED FRANCE'S CONDITIONS FOR ENTERING NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAID THAT THE HADES MISSILE'S PRE-STRATEGIC FUNCTION WAS NOW WELL-REFINED. HE ALSO SAID THAT, THANKS TO FRANCE, PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE TOWARDS A CHEMICAL WEAPONS BAN.

FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS

8. ALTHOUGH MITTERRAND'S COMMENTS ON THE DIFFICULTIES ON

FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS WERE MAINLY IN THE ECONOMIC/MONETARY FIELD (SEE SEPARATE TELEGRAM), HE UNDERLINED THE NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING OF GERMANY'S SPECIAL HISTORICAL, GEOGRAPHICAL CIRCUMSTANCES. IN VIEW OF THE CHALLENGES OVER THE COMING DECADES OF INTERNAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN GERMANY OF FRG/SOVIET RELATIONS AS WELL AS OF EC CONSTRUCTION, THE FRG AND FRANCE MUST CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER. BUT HE WARNED (UNSPECIFICALLY) THAT THE RULES OF THE GAME MUST BE RESPECTED.

FERGUSSON

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ADDITIONAL 18

ARMS CONTROL NUCLEAR

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