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FM THE HAGUE

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 481

OF 211555Z NOVEMBER 89

AND TO ROUTINE UKREP BRUSSELS, UKDEL NATO, OTHER EC POSTS

INFORMAL MEETING ON EASTERN EUROPE: DUTCH REACTIONS

SUMMARY

1. DUTCH PRESS WIDELY REPORT CAUTIOUS NETHERLANDS RESPONSE TO MITTERAND'S PROPOSAL FOR A EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK. MIXED VIEWS ON THE UTILITY OF THE PARIS MEETING.

DETAIL

2. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON HIS RETURN TO THE NETHERLANDS, FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DEN BROEK SAID THE THE PARIS MEETING HAD HELD 'NO SURPRISES'. HE DESCRIBED IT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO 'SYNCHRONISE WATCHES' AT A TIME OF RAPID DEVELOPMENTS AND SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT THE COMMISSION SHOULD EXPLORE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL COOPERATION WITH EASTERN EUROPE. HE SAID THAT THE EC AND NATO REMAINED THE APPROPRIATE INSTRUMENTS FOR PRESERVING STABILITY IN EUROPE BUT ADDED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE WEST GIVE CLEAR SIGNALS THAT IT WOULD NOT PROMOTE OR EXPLOIT POLITICAL UNREST IN EASTERN EUROPE. HOWEVER, ECONOMIC AID FROM THE EC WAS CRUCIALLY DEPENDENT ON DEMOCRATIC REFORM. VAN DEN BROEK WAS CAUTIOUS ABOUT MITTERAND'S PROPOSAL FOR A SPECIAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTION TO CHANNEL FUNDS TO EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IMPLEMENTING REFORMS. THE DUTCH VIEW, HE SAID, WAS THAT EXPERTS SHOULD FIRST CONSIDER WHETHER EXISTING INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK COULD UNDERTAKE THE TASK.

3. ALL DUTCH PAPERS REPORTED VAN DEN BROEK'S REMARKS. MOST CONCENTRATED ON THE MITTERAND PROPOSAL FOR A BANK, AND THE CAUTIOUS DUTCH RESPONSE. ASSESSMENTS OF THE UTILITY OF THE MEETING VARIED. DE VOLKSKRANT (LEFT OF CENTRE) THOUGHT THAT IT HAD PRODUCED NO 'CONCRETE RESULTS', COMMENTING THAT MEMBER STATES HAD ALREADY PREVIOUSLY AGREED ON THE NEED FOR FINANCIAL AID TO EASTERN EUROPE. PICKING UP THE POINT THAT THE MEETING HAD AGREED THAT DEMOCRATIC REFORM WAS THE PREREQUISITE FOR AID, NRC HANDELSBLAD (LIBERAL) COMMENTED THAT SUCH REFORM COULD TAKE A LONG TIME TO IMPLEMENT AND THAT ASSISTANCE WAS NECESSARY NOW. NRC ADDED THAT THE MEETING HAD PRODUCED NO NEW IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO RESPOND TO DEVELOPMENTS OF EXTRAORDINARY SIGNIFICANCE. ALGEMEEN DAGBLAD (LIBERAL) ON THE OTHER

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HAND THOUGHT THE MEETING SUCCESSFUL IN DEMONSTRATING TO THE US AND SOVIET UNION BEFORE THEIR SUMMIT MEETING THAT THE COMMUNITY, TOO, HAD AN ACTIVE ROLE TO PLAY IN EAST/WEST RELATIONS.

JENKINS

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