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INFO IMMEDIATE EAST BERLIN, BMG BERLIN, MOSCOW, PARIS, WASHINGTON

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MY TELNO 1154 : KOHL'S SPEECH ON THE GERMAN QUESTION

SUMMARY

1. TELTSCHIK, BRIEFING US AND FRENCH AMBASSADORS AND ME, PRESENTS KOHL'S SPEECH AS AN ATTEMPT TO PUT GERMAN UNITY AT THE END OF A LENGTHY PROCESS AND THUS TO HEAD OFF CALLS FOR EARLY UNITY. IT IS TRUE THAT THE MAJOR INNOVATION IN KOHL'S 10-POINT PROGRAMME - THE SUGGESTION OF CONFEDERATIVE STRUCTURES - NEED NOT ALTER PRESENT ALLIANCES AND IN ITSELF MAY NOT BE HARMFUL. BUT KOHL'S DECISION TO SET OUT A PROGRAMME CULMINATING IN UNITY, WITHOUT AGREEMENT OF COALITION PARTNERS OR PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH ALLIES, IS A SIGN OF THE SPEED WITH WHICH THE DEBATE IS MOVING. AND TELTSCHIK VOLUNTEERED THAT KOHL'S VISION OF A LENGTHY PROCESS BEFORE UNITY COULD BE OVERTAKEN BY OTHER VIEWS BEFORE LONG.

DETAIL

2. TELTSCHIK, KOHL'S DIPLOMATIC ADVISER, BRIEFED THE US AND FRENCH AMBASSADORS AND ME ABOUT KOHL'S SPEECH TWO HOURS AFTER THE CHANCELLOR HAD SPOKEN. HE SAID THAT THE 10-POINT PROGRAMME IN THE SPEECH HAD BEEN ADVANCED ON KOHL'S OWN AUTHORITY, WITHOUT AGREEMENT WITH COALITION PARTNERS OR ALLIES. BUT IT HAD TAKEN ACCOUNT OF NUMEROUS TELEPHONE CALLS BETWEEN KOHL AND BUSH, CONTACTS BETWEEN KOHL AND MITTERRAND, THE EC SUMMIT ON 18 NOVEMBER AND CONTACTS AT MANY LEVELS WITH THE GDR.

3. THE CHANCELLOR'S TEN POINTS HAD ALSO TAKEN ACCOUNT OF HIS CONTACTS WITH GORBACHEV AROUND 9 NOVEMBER. THERE HAD ALSO BEEN IMPORTANT CONTACTS WITH ADVISERS TO GORBACHEV. THEY HAD SUGGESTED THAT THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR SHOULD NOT VISIT THE GDR BEFORE THE COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS THERE ON 14/15 DECEMBER, THUS IMPLYING THAT THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP MIGHT NO LONGER BE IN PLACE AFTER THE CONGRESS. TELTSCHIK SAID THAT THE EARLIEST THE CHANCELLOR COULD VISIT EAST GERMANY WAS 19 DECEMBER. HE WOULD NOT GO TO EAST BERLIN AND HOPED TO GO TO LEIPZIG. HIS DECISION WOULD DEPEND ON THE POLICY DECISIONS TAKEN AT THE PARTY CONGRESS. RETURNING TO WHAT GORBACHEV'S

ADVISERS HAD SAID, TELTSCHIK SAID THEY HAD REVEALED THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE REFLECTING ABOUT FAR-REACHING POSSIBILITIES INCLUDING A FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE, A PEACE TREATY, AND A UNITED, NEUTRAL GERMANY. BUT THE SOVIET POSITION STILL INSISTED ON TWO BASIC POINTS: NO DEPARTURES FROM THE WARSAW PACT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE SEPARATE STATEHOOD OF THE GDR. IT WAS INTERESTING, HOWEVER, THAT GORBACHEV'S ADVISERS WERE LIMITING THIS STATEMENT ABOUT THE SOVIET BOTTOM LINE TO PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND NO LONGER IMPLYING THAT THE BOTTOM LINE COULD NEVER CHANGE. GORBACHEV'S ADVISERS HAD ASKED TELTSCHIK WHETHER THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR WANTED A PEACE TREATY OR A FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE AND WHAT FORM OF UNITY WOULD IN DUE COURSE BE PREFERRED.

4. TELTSCHIK CONTINUED THAT THESE SOVIET REMARKS AMONG OTHER FACTORS HAD MADE THE CHANCELLOR DECIDE THAT IT WAS TIME TO PRESENT A WAY FORWARD ON THE GERMAN QUESTION. THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC'S ALLIES SHOULD CAREFULLY NOTE THAT KOHL'S SPEECH, BEFORE SETTING OUT THE 10 POINTS, DREW ATTENTION TO THE FACTORS WHICH HAD PRODUCED POSITIVE CHANGE IN EUROPE. THESE FACTORS BEGAN WITH THE FRG'S MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES AND THE FIRMNESS OF NATO OVER INF. IT ALSO INCLUDED WEST EUROPEAN INTEGRATION, GORBACHEV'S POLICY OF REFORM, THE REFORM IN POLAND AND HUNGARY, CSCE, THE FREQUENCY OF EAST-WEST SUMMITS, THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC'S OSTPOLITIK AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC'S INSISTENCE THAT THE GERMAN NATION REMAINED ONE. TELTSCHIK SAID THAT THESE POINTS, ESPECIALLY THE ONE ABOUT NATO, SHOULD BE SEEN AS BELONGING INSEPARABLY WITH THE 10 POINTS THEMSELVES. AS WE KNEW, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT STOOD FIRMLY BY ITS MEMBERSHIP OF THE ALLIANCE. TELTSCHIK CONTINUED THAT THE 10 POINTS SHOULD BE SEEN AS A SINGLE PACKAGE. THE MAJOR NOVELTY WAS POINT 5, ABOUT CONFEDERATIVE STRUCTURES. THESE WERE PRESENTED AS OPENING UP THE AIM OF A FEDERATION IN DUE COURSE IN GERMANY. (MY TUR DESCRIBED THIS MISTAKENLY IN PARAGRAPH 2(5) AS A CONFEDERATION). TELTSCHIK CONTINUED THAT THE CHANCELLOR HAD DELIBERATELY NOT SPOKEN OF A CONFEDERATION SINCE THAT REQUIRED A TREATY BETWEEN TWO SEPARATE STATES AND THEREFORE WOULD CONFIRM THE EXISTENCE OF TWO STATES IN GERMANY. A FURTHER ADVANTAGE OF PROPOSING CONFEDERATIVE STRUCTURES BUT NOT A CONFEDERATION WAS THAT THE FORMER DID NOT CALL THE TWO GERMANIES' MEMBERSHIP OF ALLIANCES INTO QUESTION. TELTSCHIK POINTED OUT THAT KOHL'S POINT 9 ABOUT ARMS CONTROL REFERRED TO NUCLEAR REDUCTIONS ONLY BY THE SUPERPOWERS.

5. I ASKED TELTSCHIK WHY THE CHANCELLOR HAD MADE THIS MAJOR MOVE ON THE GERMAN QUESTION AT THIS TIME. TELTSCHIK SAID THAT THE CHANCELLOR HAD FELT A NEED TO SET OUT CLEAR GERMAN VIEWS, TO INFLUENCE THE THINKING THAT WAS EVIDENTLY TAKING PLACE IN MOSCOW.

SECONDLY KOHL HAD WANTED TO LEAD THE DEBATE IN THE FRG, WHICH HAD BEEN FLOUNDERING RECENTLY (MY TELNO 1151). HE HAD ALSO WANTED, BY SETTING GERMAN UNITY AT THE END OF A LENGTHY PROCESS ALSO INVOLVING A EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT, TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE IN THE GDR WHO INCREASINGLY WERE CALLING FOR GERMAN UNITY AND MIGHT START SAYING THAT IT SHOULD HAPPEN SOON. THE CHANCELLOR ALSO HOPED THAT A CLEAR PROGRAMME CULMINATING IN GERMAN UNITY WOULD INSTIL PATIENCE INTO THE PEOPLE OF THE GDR AND THUS REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE FLOOD OF EMIGRANTS MIGHT BEGIN AGAIN. FINALLY, THE CHANCELLOR WANTED TO RE-EMPT CALLS FOR REUNIFICATION IN NEUTRALITY, WHICH MIGHT COME FROM THE LEFT IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC BEFORE LONG. TELTSCHIK ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT KOHL'S ATTEMPT TO BE A ROCK IN THE STORM AND TO SET REUNIFICATION WAY DOWN THE ROAD COULD BE OVERTAKEN BY OTHER VIEWS.

COMMENT

6. TELTSCHIK WAS AT PAINS TO STRESS THAT FEDERAL GERMAN MEMBERSHIP OF NATO WAS NOT IN QUESTION AND THAT THE REFERENCE TO IT IN KOHL'S SPEECH SHOULD BE TAKEN AS PART OF THE 10 POINTS. I AM SURE THAT KOHL AND TELTSCHIK ARE SINCERE ABOUT THE ALLIANCE. BUT IT IS A PITY THAT THE 10 POINTS THEMSELVES DO NOT MENTION THE ALLIANCE AND TO MENTION OTHER MATTERS COVERED IN THE PRELIMINARY PART OF THE SPEECH. I FIND GENERALLY CONVINCING TELTSCHIK'S EXPLANATION OF KOHL'S REASONS FOR SPEAKING UP NOW. AND IT IS TRUE THAT CONFEDERATIVE STRUCTURES, AT LEAST IN THE EXAMPLES GIVEN IN KOHL'S SPEECH, MAY NOT IN THEMSELVES BE HARMFUL. BUT SOME OF THEM, NOTABLY 'A COMMON PARLIAMENTARY BODY' COULD ACQUIRE MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE OVER TIME. THE KEY POINT IS THAT THE PRESSURES HAVE REACHED A LEVEL WHERE KOHL HAS FELT OBLIGED TO MAKE A HIGH PROFILE STATEMENT OF A POLICY EXPRESSLY INTENDED TO LEAD IN TIME TO GERMAN UNITY. AND HE HAS DONE SO ON HIS OWN AUTHORITY, NOT ON BEHALF OF THE WHOLE COALITION, AND WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH THE ALLIES HAVING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GERMAN QUESTION. IT SHOWS HOW FAST THE GERMAN QUESTION IS MOVING.

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