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MDHIAN 6729

Christopher Nelson
seems to welcome
reunification *mb*

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FM BONN

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 1166

OF 291546Z NOVEMBER 89

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MY TELNO 1156 : KOHL AND THE GERMAN QUESTION

SUMMARY

1. FURTHER COMMENTS ON KOHL'S LANDMARK SPEECH. REUNIFICATION IN THE FORM OF A GERMAN FEDERATION IS NOW CLEARLY AN AIM OF POLICY, THOUGH WITHOUT A TIMESCALE. SUBJECT TO REFORM IN THE GDR, AN ORGANIC PROCESS OF THE TWO GERMANIES COMING TOGETHER THROUGH COOPERATION AGREEMENTS AND 'CONFEDERATIVE STRUCTURES' MAY NOW BEGIN. KOHL'S PROGRAMME COULD BE OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS, AS ELECTIONS IN BOTH GERMANIES APPROACH.

DETAIL

2. KOHL'S 10-POINT PLAN HAS GONE DOWN WELL WITH GENSCHER AND THE OPPOSITION, AND VERY WELL WITH THE MEDIA. HE HAS MANAGED TO SATISFY THE DOMESTIC CONSTITUENCIES HE WAS ADDRESSING, AND WILL BE AWAITING WITH ANTICIPATION THE REACTIONS OF THE EXTERNAL ONES - THE GDR LEADERSHIP, THE WESTERN ALLIES AND THE USSR.

3. I SEE KOHL'S SPEECH AS A MAJOR EVENT. FOR THE FIRST TIME, IT TAKES REUNIFICATION OUT OF THE REALMS OF ASPIRATION AND MAKES IT THE CULIMINATION AND AIM OF A STAGED PROGRAMME. HE HAS MADE CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT UNITY IS SUBJECT TO THE GERMANS WANTING IT, AND THIS SHIELDS HIM FROM THE ACCUSATION OF TELLING THE EAST GERMANS WHAT THEY SHOULD WANT.

4. MANY OF THE 10 POINTS ARE FAMILIAR, BUT THEY GAIN IN IMPACT BY BEING ASSEMBLED IN A PROGRAMME. THE KEY NOVELTY IS 'CONFEDERATIVE STRUCTURES'. AS I ARGUED IN TUR, THESE MAY NOT BE HARMFUL IN THEMSELVES BUT THEY COULD DEVELOP INTO THE ELEMENTS OF A FUTURE GERMAN FEDERATION, AND KOHL SAID EXPLICITLY THAT THIS WAS THE AIM. ANOTHER NOVELTY IS THAT IT IS NOW THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S EXPLICIT POSITION THAT A UNITED GERMANY SHOULD BE FEDERAL IN STRUCTURE.

5. ASSUMING THE GDR FALLS IN WITH MAJOR PARTS OF THE PLAN, THE TWO GERMANIES LOOK LIKE EMBARKING ON A PROCESS OF COMING TOGETHER

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THROUGH INTENSIFIED COOPERATION AND FAR REACHING BILATERAL AGREEMENTS AS WELL AS 'CONFEDERATIVE STRUCTURES'.

6. KOHL NO DOUBT HOPES THAT HIS NEW POSITION WILL HOLD THE RING FOR QUITE A TIME AND PROVIDE A BASIS FOR THE CDU'S ELECTION PLATFORM. BUT HIS 10 POINTS MAY WELL BE TAKEN INCREASINGLY FOR GRANTED, AS THE DEBATE ON THE GERMAN QUESTION MOVES FORWARD. IT IS HELPFUL THAT KOHL HAS SET NO TIMESCALES AND HAS LINKED HIS PROGRAMME TO WIDER EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENTS WHICH WILL TAKE CONSIDERABLE TIME. BUT IN AN ELECTION YEAR IN BOTH GERMANIES, HIS NEW POSITION COULD BE OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS.

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