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OF 111135Z DECEMBER 89

INFO PRIORITY BMG BERLIN, EAST BERLIN, UKDEL NATO, UKREP BRUSSELS
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THE GERMAN QUESTION: FRG PRESS

SUMMARY

1. FACTUAL REPORTS THAT THE AMBASSADORS OF THE FOUR POWERS ARE MEETING TODAY IN BERLIN. MIXED COMMENT ON OUTCOME OF EUROPEAN COUNCIL. SPIEGEL ATTACKS UK AND FRANCE.

DETAIL

2. MOST MAJOR PAPERS HAVE THE DETAILS OF TODAY'S FOUR POWER MEETING IN BERLIN. NO PAPER OF SIGNIFICANCE YET HAS EDITORIAL COMMENT.

3. THE FOUR MAJOR PARTIES ARE ALL REPORTED AS WELCOMING THE TEXT AGREED BY THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON THE GERMAN QUESTION. EHMKE, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE SPD PARLIAMENTARY PARTY, ADDED HOWEVER THAT THE EC STATEMENT SHOULD BE SEEN AS A RESPONSE TO KOHL'S ELECTORALLY MOTIVATED ATTEMPT TO GO IT ALONE.

4. THE PRESS REACTION IS LESS POSITIVE. THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE (CONSERVATIVE) DESCRIBES THE REACTION OF THE FRG'S EC PARTNERS TO KOHL'S TEN POINT PLAN AS ONE OF SUSPICION RATHER THAN ENCOURAGEMENT. THE SUEDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG (INDEPENDENT) CALLS IT A HESITANT YES, WITH GNASHING OF TEETH IN THE BACKGROUND. DIE WELT (CONSERVATIVE) DESCRIBES THE PRIME MINISTER AS HAVING BEEN OF ALL THE SPEAKERS IN THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL THE MOST RECOGNISABLY OPPOSED TO REUNIFICATION, BUT MAKES PLAIN THAT ANDREOTTI WAS NOT FAR BEHIND.

5. AUGSTEIN IN DER SPIEGEL (INDEPENDENT: LEFT OF CENTRE) COMMENTS THAT FRANCE AND THE UK HAVE JOINED THE SOVIET UNION IN OPPOSING GERMAN UNITY. FULL TRANSLATION BY FAX. IN SEEKING TO PUT OFF THE DISCUSSION FOR 10 - 15 YEARS THE PRIME MINISTER SEEMS TO BE 'OUT OF HER MIND'. REFERRING TO ARTICLE 7 OF THE 1952/54 RELATIONS CONVENTION, AUGSTEIN SAYS THAT IF FRIENDS SIMPLY BREAK TREATIES, THE WEST GERMANS WILL DRAW THEIR OWN CONCLUSIONS. THE GERMANS WILL PROCEED RESPONSIBLY TOWARDS UNITY EVEN IF THEIR ALLIES AND THE USSR DO NOT BACK THEM. THE FRG WOULD HAVE LIKED A COMMUNITY OF TRUST WITH ALL THREE WESTERN ALLIES: INSTEAD, THIS WILL BE MOST EASILY ACHIEVED

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