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FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY : MITTERRAND TV INTERVIEW, 10 DECEMBER

SUMMARY

1. MITTERRAND EXPRESSES SATISFACTION - BUT NO TRIUMPHALISM - AT STRASBOURG OUTCOME. SPEAKS OPENLY OF HIS PRESSURE ON KOHL FOR IGC DATE. MEASURED APPROACH TO GERMAN REUNIFICATION - THE GERMANS SHOULD REMEMBER THE ORIGINS OF PRESENT FRONTIERS. GERMANY MUST NOT POSSESS NUCLEAR WEAPONS. SUPPORT FOR GORBACHEV. THE ALLIANCES SHOULD REMAIN - EUROPEAN DEFENCE A COMPLEX ISSUE. FRANCE TO AVOID HASTY CUTS IN DEFENCE SPENDING.

DETAIL

2. PRESIDENT MITTERRAND GAVE A LONG RADIO AND TELEVISION INTERVIEW ON 10 DECEMBER. MAIN POINTS ON THE STRASBOURG COUNCIL AND OTHER FOREIGN QUESTIONS WERE AS FOLLOWS.

STRASBOURG

3. MITTERRAND SPOKE WITH SATISFACTION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE STRASBOURG EUROPEAN COUNCIL, CONCENTRATING ON ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION (EMU) AND THE SOCIAL CHARTER. PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE, AT A DIFFICULT TIME, ALONG THE ROAD ALREADY MARKED OUT TOWARDS POLITICAL UNION. HE HAD SET CLEAR OBJECTIVES FOR STRASBOURG: TO CALL AN IGC: TO SHOW THAT ALL CITIZENS WOULD BENEFIT FROM EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION (I.E. SOCIAL CHARTER) TO MARK PROGRESS TOWARDS THE SINGLE MARKET: AND TO HELP THE EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY THROUGH AGREEMENT ON A EUROPEAN BANK. ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION WOULD TAKE TIME, BUT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO GIVE IT A PUSH. KOHL WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO PUT THE IGC BACK, INFLUENCED BY PUBLIC OPINION, PARTICULARLY IN BUSINESS CIRCLES RELUCTANT TO SHARE GERMANY'S ECONOMIC POWER, AND BY THE ELECTORAL TIMETABLE:

QUOTE BUT IT WAS ENOUGH FOR ME TO EXPLAIN MYSELF CLEARLY TO HIM. I SAID TO HIM QUOTE I BELIEVE IT TO BE NECESSARY AND IN ANY

CASE I SHALL PUT THE QUESTION TO THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND I SHALL ASK EACH COUNTRY TO DECLARE ITSELF. WE HAVE TAKEN ON A DECISIVE RESPONSIBILITY IN ORDER TO MAKE EUROPE ADVANCE ON ALL FRONTS. WE SHALL CONTINUE UNQUOTE. HE'S A CONVINCED EUROPEAN, AND HE COMPLETELY UNDERSTOOD. THERE IS NO AMBIGUITY ABOUT HIS POSITION, THOUGH HE HAS HIS PROBLEMS UNQUOTE. THE SOCIAL CHARTER WAS NECESSARY TO SHOW THAT EVERYONE WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE SINGLE MARKET. IT WENT LESS FAR THAN HE, MITTERRAND, BUT FURTHER THAN SOME OF HIS PARTNERS, WOULD HAVE LIKED. IT WAS NOT JUST A STATEMENT OF GOOD INTENTIONS, BUT A FRAMEWORK WHICH THE COMMISSION WOULD NOW FILL OUT. THE EUROPEAN BANK WOULD NOT BE CONFINED TO THE EC, BUT OPEN TO OTHERS FROM EAST AND WEST - THE US, JAPAN, CANADA - TO JOIN.

GERMAN QUESTION

4. MITTERRAND CONFIRMED THAT KOHL HAD NOT CONSULTED HIM BEFORE ANNOUNCING HIS TEN-POINT PROGRAMME. HE TOOK VIEWERS THROUGH THE STRASBOURG COMMUNIQUE, INSISTING THAT GERMAN REUNIFICATION MUST BE ACHIEVED DEMOCRATICALLY AND PEACEFULLY, RESPECTING THE RELEVANT AGREEMENTS AND TREATIES, AND IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF EUROPEAN INTERGRATION. THE REFERENCE TO THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT INDICATED INVIOABILITY OF FRONTIERS. RESPECT FOR FRONTIERS WAS AN ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE, AND A NEW GERMAN BALANCE MUST NOT BE ACHIEVED TO THE DETRIMENT OF EUROPEAN BALANCE. MITTERRAND DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN THE INNER GERMAN BORDER AND THE ODER-NEISSE FRONTIER: THE LATTER MUST REMAIN AS THEY WERE. ASKED LATER WHETHER A REUNITED GERMANY MIGHT HAVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS, HE SAID THAT THIS WAS A FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION: GERMANY MUST NOT POSSESS NUCLEAR WEAPONS. NOR SHOULD IT BE NEUTRALISED. HE SAID THAT HE STILL HOPED TO VISIT THE GDR ON 20-22 DECEMBER: HE HAD CONSULTED KOHL BEFORE ACCEPTING HONECKER'S ORIGINAL INVITATION, AND KOHL HAD SUPPORTED THE VISIT.

5. GDR ACCESSION TO THE COMMUNITY WAS NOT A ACTUAL QUESTION. FRG/GDR INTER-STATE AGREEMENTS ON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS AND OF VARIOUS FORMS 'INCLUDING CONFEDERATIVE' WERE WHAT ONE SHOULD EXPECT TO SEE.

SOVIET UNION

6. MITTERRAND STRESSED HIS GOOD RELATIONS WITH GORBACHEV: FRANCE AND RUSSIA HAD A HISTORY OF COOPERATION, AND QUOTE ACROSS THE CENTURIES HAD SERVED AS POINTS OF EQUILIBRIUM IN THE GREAT MOVEMENTS OF HISTORY UNQUOTE. GORBACHEV WAS A PARTNER, INCLUDING ECONOMICALLY, NOT AN ADVERSARY. AT KIEV ON 6 DECEMBER HE HAD SEEMED MORE SERENE AND FIRMER THAN IN PARIS IN JULY. BEING AT THE ORIGIN OF THE REFORMS SWEEPING EASTERN EUROPE, HE MUST REALISE THAT IN DUE COURSE THE

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SOVIET UNION ITSELF WOULD HAVE TO DEVELOP A MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM.

NATO

7. MITTERRAND NOTED GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT NATO AND WARSAW PACT SHOULD REMAIN. ON 18 NOVEMBER AT THE ELYSEE THIS HAD BEEN THE FIRST REACTION OF THE EC HEADS OF GOVERNMENT. GORBACHEV HAD SAID THE SAME, THAT THE ALLIANCES PROVIDED A GOOD FRAMEWORK. AS FOR EUROPEAN DEFENCE, THIS WAS A DESIRABLE OBJECTIVE BUT IT WAS A COMPLEX MATTER AND THE TWO ALLIANCES WOULD NOT COLLAPSE OVERNIGHT. THE QUESTION OF THE US WITHDRAWING ITS FORCES FROM EUROPE WAS NOT AN ACTUAL ONE.

DISARMAMENT

8. MITTERRAND NOTED THAT THE MALTA MEETING HAD GIVEN NEW IMPETUS TO START. ONLY IF THE US AND SOVIET UNION WENT MUCH FURTHER TOWARDS DISARMAMENT WOULD FRANCE JOIN IN THE NEGOTIATION. AT PRESENT GIVEN THE HUGE SUPERPOWER ARSENALS FRANCE HAD NOTHING TO PUT ON THE TABLE: THE FRENCH NUCLEAR ARSENAL WAS JUST SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE THE DEFENCE OF FRANCE. IT WOULD BE RIGHT TO REDUCE FRENCH DEFENCE SPENDING IF THE SOVIET UNION DID THE SAME. BUT ONE COULD NOT DECIDE ON NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE CAPABILITIES JUST ON THE BASIS OF THE LATEST EVENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE. MITTERRAND REJECTED QUESTIONS ABOUT HYPOTHETICAL CUTS IN DEFENCE SYSTEMS QUOTE BUT LET ME CATCH MY BREATH. LET ME DISCUSS THIS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE. INDEED WE HAVE ALREADY MET REGARDING THIS QUESTION. UNQUOTE.

COMMENT

9. THIS WAS A RELAXED AND CONFIDENT PERFORMANCE BY MITTERRAND. HE WAS EVIDENTLY CHEERED BY STRASBOURG BUT AVOIDED TRIUMPHALISM. ON GERMANY, HE SEEMED MAINLY INTERESTED, AS AT KIEV ON 6 DECEMBER, IN RE-ASSURING THE SOVIET UNION AND FRENCH DOMESTIC OPINION. ASKED AT THE END FOR HIS VIEW OF HIS MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE 1980S, HE MENTIONED OFF THE CUFF HIS WORK FOR EUROPE (QUOTE BENEFICIAL FOR FRANCE UNQUOTE): THAT FRANCE (IN EUROPE) HELD A PROMINENT PLACE IN THE WORLD: FRANCO-GERMAN RECONCILIATION AND HIS VISIT TO VERDUN WITH KOHL: HIS WORK FOR JUSTICE IN THE 3RD WORLD: AND THE GOOD STATE OF RELATIONS WITH THE US AND USSR.

10. SEE MY 2 IFTS (NOT TO ALL) ON LEBANON AND INTERNAL POLITICAL QUESTIONS..

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