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OUR TELNO 23 : KOHL ON THE GERMAN QUESTION

SUMMARY

1. A CAREFULLY MEASURED STATEMENT BY KOHL IN HIS FIRST MAJOR COMMENT OF THE NEW YEAR. IN RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS HE ALSO ATTACKED OPPONENTS OF GERMAN UNITY REFUSED TO COMMENT FURTHER ON POLAND'S WESTERN BORDER AND ANNOUNCED THAT HE INTENDS TO VISIT MOSCOW BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR.

DETAIL

2. ONCE AGAIN KOHL TOOK PAINS TO EMPHASISE THE NEED TO SET THE GERMAN QUESTION WITHIN THE WIDER EUROPEAN CONTEXT: 'THE FUTURE ARCHITECTURE OF GERMANY MUST FIT INTO THE ARCHITECTURE OF EUROPE'. THE REFORMS IN EASTERN EUROPE HAD TO BE ABLE TO DEVELOP IN STABILITY. ASKED WHETHER EUROPE TOOK PRIORITY OVER GERMAN UNITY, KOHL SAID THEY WERE OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE. THE GOAL OF HIS DEUTSCHLANDPOLITIK REMAINED A GERMAN FEDERATION VIA THE TWO STAGES OF A TREATY-BASED COMMUNITY AND CONFEDERATIVE STRUCTURES. CONFEDERATION WAS NOT HIS AIM.

3. KOHL THANKED MITTERRAND FOR THE LATTER'S RECENT UNDERTAKING THAT FRANCE WOULD RECOGNISE AND RESPECT THE REALITY OF THE DESIRE OF THE GERMANS FOR UNITY. HE NOTED THAT NOT ONLY IN THE EAST BUT ALSO AMONGST ALLIES IN THE WEST THERE WERE NUMEROUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT GERMAN UNITY. SOME, WHO WERE AFFECTED BY HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE, HE COULD UNDERSTAND. OTHERS HE COULD NOT. HE COULD ONLY WARN PEOPLE NOT TO OPPOSE GERMAN UNITY ON ECONOMIC GROUNDS.

4. KOHL DECLINED TO MAKE ANY FURTHER STATEMENT ON POLAND'S WESTERN BORDER, CITING HERZOG, PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL COURT'S STATEMENT (OUR TELNO 006) TO THE EFFECT THAT A FEDERREAL

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CHANCELLOR COULD NOT LEGALLY TAKE DECISIONS AFFECTING GERMANY AS A WHOLE.

5. KOHL SAID HE WOULD VISIT MOSCOW THIS YEAR FOR TALKS WITH GORBACHEV.

COMMENT

6. IN LINE WITH TELTSCHIK'S FORECAST (BONN TELNO 020) THERE IS LITTLE NEW IN KOHL'S STATEMENT. HIS MAIN CONCERN WAS CLEARLY TO SEND A CLEAR WARNING TO THE SED ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF RUNNING A CLEAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

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