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FM ROME

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VISIT TO ROME BY GENSCHER, 21 FEBRUARY

SUMMARY

1. GENSCHER SEEKS TO REASSURE ITALIANS ON GERMAN INTENTIONS REGARDING UNIFICATION AND EC INTEGRATION. DE MICHELIS RESTATES RESERVATIONS ABOUT TWO PLUS FOUR BUT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT IT IS FOR THE GERMANS TO DECIDE THE PACE OF UNIFICATION.

DETAIL

2. GENSCHER PAID A BRIEF VISIT TO ROME ON 21 FEBRUARY FOR TALKS AND DINNER WITH ANDREOTTI AND DE MICHELIS. THE VISIT WAS APPARENTLY ARRANGED AT SHORT NOTICE.

3. IN REMARKS TO THE PRESS BEFORE DINNER, DE MICHELIS DESCRIBED THE TALKS WITH GENSCHER AS VERY FRUITFUL AND SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO DIVERGENCE BETWEEN GERMAN AND ITALIAN VIEWS. HE RESTATED HIS BELIEF THAT THE TWO PLUS FOUR FORMULA WAS COMPETENT ONLY TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF BERLIN'S STATUS AND ADDED: 'ALL THE OTHER EXTERNAL ASPECTS OF UNIFICATION SHOULD BE DEALT WITH IN THE WIDER FORA OF EC, NATO AND CSCE'. DE MICHELIS SAID THAT THE ITALIANS WERE IN PRINCIPLE IN FAVOUR OF GERMAN UNIFICATION. THIS WAS NOT ONLY INEVITABLE BUT ALSO JUSTIFIED. THE PACE WOULD BE DECIDED BY THE GERMANS THEMSELVES. TO PROLONG THE PROCESS OF UNIFICATION COULD BE A CAUSE OF INSTABILITY.

4. THERE WERE NO PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM ANDREOTTI OR GENSCHER, ALTHOUGH THE LATTER IS REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD THE ITALIANS THAT THE FRG AGREED ON THE NEED TO ACCELERATE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION, BUT COULD NOT WAIT FOR A STRONGER COMMUNITY TO EMERGE BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH UNIFICATION.

COMMENT

5. THE SURPRISE NATURE OF GENSCHER'S VISIT HAS FUELLED SPECULATION

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IN THE ITALIAN MEDIA THAT HIS MAIN MISSION WAS TO ALLAY ITALIAN FEARS ABOUT GERMAN UNIFICATION. THE FRG AMBASSADOR TOLD ME TODAY, HOWEVER, THAT GENSCHER'S VISIT WAS 'TOTALLY DEVOID OF DRAMA'. THE INTENTION IN ROME HAD BEEN SIMPLY THE WISH TO HAVE 'THE CLOSEST BILATERAL CONTACT' WITH THE ITALIANS AND TO PRESENT GERMAN UNIFICATION AS A GOAL TO BE PURSUED 'SOLELY IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT'.

6. SEE MIFT FOR A REPORT ON DE MICHELIS' EARLIER REMARKS TO PARLIAMENT ON GERMAN UNIFICATION AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION.

WOOD

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