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CALL ON MODROW

SUMMARY

1. I PAID A COURTESY CALL ON MODROW ON 28 FEBRUARY. HE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S PREPARATION OF THE ELECTIONS, IRRITATION AT THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR'S STYLE, CONCERN AT FEDERAL GERMAN POLICIES TOWARDS UNIFICATION, AND ASKED THAT WE SHOULD DO WHAT WE COULD TO SLOW THE PROCESS DOWN.

DETAIL

2. I PAID A COURTESY CALL ON THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON THE AFTERNOON OF WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY. MODROW LOOKED TIRED BUT SPOKE LUCIDLY AND ENERGETICALLY. HIS MAIN THEMES WERE AS FOLLOWS (FULLER ACCOUNT BY BAG TO FCO AND BONN).

3. AFTER REVIEWING EVENTS IN THE GDR SINCE OCTOBER, MODROW EXPRESSED SATISFACTION AT THE WAY THE GOVERNMENT HAD SETTLED DOWN TO WORK. AFTER INITIAL HESITATION THE ROUND TABLE MEMBERS WERE SHARING FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISIONS. HE THOUGHT THEY WERE GRATEFUL FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE WORKINGS OF GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE DAY WHEN SOME OF THEM WOULD HAVE TO FORM ONE.

4. MODROW SHED IRRITATION AT THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR'S STYLE IN DEALING WITH THE GDR AND CONCERN AT THE APPROACH THE FEDERAL AUTHORITIES WERE ADOPTING. NO ONE COULD SAY THAT HE (MODROW) HAD NOT WORKED RESPONSIBLY TO PREPARE FOR UNITY, WHICH WAS INEVITABLE. BUT HIS EFFORTS HAD NOT MET THE RESPONSE HE HAD HOPED FOR. HE PUT THE PROBLEMS DOWN TO KOHL'S APPROACH BEING DICTATED BY ELECTORAL CONSIDERATIONS RATHER THAN THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE. BUT HE THOUGHT THAT KOHL'S APPROACH MIGHT PROVE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE.

5. AS TO STYLE, MODROW POINTED TO THE OFF-HAND TREATMENT GIVEN TO THE GDR DELEGATION WHEN IT VISITED BONN IN MID-FEBRUARY. AS TO SUBSTANCE, HIS CONCERN WAS THAT THE HASTE IMPOSED BY THE CHANCELLOR

WOULD MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO DEAL PROPERLY WITH THE NEXUS OF PROBLEMS RAISED BY UNIFICATION. THERE WERE THREE ASPECTS WHICH NEEDED TO BE TIED TOGETHER: REPLACEMENT OF THE MARK BY THE DEUTSCHMARK, THE ALIGNMENT OF THE ECONOMY, INCLUDING WIDE-RANGING CHANGES IN LEGISLATION, AND SOCIAL MEASURES TO EASE THE STRAINS WHICH THE OTHER CHANGES WOULD IMPOSE. CONCENTRATING ON ONE ELEMENT AT THE EXPENSE OF THE OTHERS COULD BE VERY DAMAGING, AND IMPORTANT ASPECTS WERE BEING NEGLECTED.

6. ONE OF THESE ASPECTS, RECOGNISED BY BUSINESSMEN IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC BUT IGNORED BY THE AUTHORITIES, WAS THE VALUE OF THE GDR'S POTENTIAL ROLE AS A SUPPLIER OF THE SOVIET UNION. THE GDR WAS THE SOVIET UNION'S PRINCIPAL SUPPLIER IN COMECON, JUST AS THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC WAS AMONG OTHER STATES. IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO GIVE THE SOVIET UNION A HELPING HAND IN COMING YEARS IN THE INTERESTS OF STABILITY.

7. AGAINST THAT BACKGROUND, HERR MODROW SAID THAT HE WISHED TO ASK FOR BRITISH HELP, NOT IN PREVENTING THE PRESENT MOVEMENT TOWARDS UNIFICATION, WHICH WAS INEVITABLE, BUT IN CONTROLLING IT IN THE INTEREST OF STABILITY IN EUROPE. IT WAS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE THAT THERE SHOULD BE TIME TO THINK THROUGH THE RELATIONSHIPS, NOT ONLY BETWEEN THE TWO GERMANIES BUT BETWEEN WHATEVER EMERGED AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. (HE MENTIONED IN THIS CONTEXT, THOUGH WITHOUT ANY GREAT EMPHASIS, HIS SUGGESTION FOR A MILITARILY NEUTRAL GERMAN STATE.)

8. I SAID THAT IN THE UK'S VIEW WHETHER AND HOW THE TWO GERMAN STATES WERE UNITED WAS THE BUSINESS OF THE GERMANS ALONE. BUT IF THEY DECIDED THAT THEY DID WISH TO UNITE, THE INTERESTS OF THEIR NEIGHBOURS AND OTHERS CONCERNED MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. WE THOUGHT IT OF GREAT IMPORTANCE THAT A UNITED GERMANY SHOULD BE BEDDED NOT ONLY INTO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY BUT ALSO INTO NATO, THOUGH WE COULD CONTEMPLATE ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WOULD ALLOW SOVIET TROOPS TO REMAIN FOR A WHILE IN WHAT WAS NOW THE TERRITORY OF THE GDR.

9. AS I STOOD UP TO GO HERR MODROW REPEATED HIS MESSAGE THAT HE LOOKED TO US TO STEADY THE PACE OF THE DISCUSSION OF THE EXTERNAL ASPECTS OF GERMAN UNITY, AND ASKED THAT HIS PERSONAL GOOD WISHES BE PASSED TO YOU AND TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

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