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TELNO 418

OF 091711Z APRIL 90

INFO ROUTINE UKREP BRUSSELS, OTHER EC POSTS

FRAME GENERAL

BONN TELNO 440 : DUBLIN EUROPEAN COUNCIL, INSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS:
FRENCH VIEWS

SUMMARY

1. SOUNDINGS IN THE QUAI SUGGEST THAT FRENCH VIEWS ARE (A) NOT YET FIRM BUT (B) VERY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF GERMANS, BELGIANS OR ITALIANS. EXPECTATION IF LITTLE SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION IN DUBLIN ON 28 APRIL, BUT OF PROCEDURAL EXCHANGES, DURING WHICH THE FRENCH WILL ARGUE FOR A SECOND IGC IN 1991 (ON A SLOWER TIMING THAN THE EMU/IGC).

DETAIL

2. KERR SAW BOISSIEU (QUAI) FOR AN HOUR OR SO THIS MORNING IN THE MARGINS OF THE EBRD MEETING TO CHECK ON THE FRENCH APPROACH TO THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL IN DUBLIN ON 28 APRIL AND TO PROBE THE DEGREE OF FRANCO-GERMAN CONTACTS ON INSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS.

3. KERR SAID THAT WE THOUGHT THE DUBLIN COUNCIL SHOULD SET THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WOULD LEAD TO THE INTEGRATION OF THE GDR INTO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. TO CONSIDER INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AT DUBLIN WOULD DISTRACT FROM THIS COMPLICATED DOSSIER. INDEED TO GET IMMERSED IN INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES AT ALL OVER THE NEXT YEAR OR SO - OTHER THAN THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH EMU - WOULD DISTRACT FROM THE SIX BIG ISSUES WHICH YOU HAD OUTLINED TO DUMAS ON 28 MARCH. BETTER LEAVE INSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS TO ONE SIDE THEREFORE.

4. BOISSIEU SAID THAT THERE WAS NO FORMAL FRENCH POSITION ON ANY OF THIS. HE COULD ONLY SPEAK PERSONALLY. THE FRENCH STARTING POINT WAS THAT LIKE IT OR NOT INSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS WERE ON THE AGENDA, VIZ EMU, THE REVIEW OF POLITICAL CO-OPERATION REQUIRED BY ARTICLE 30 OF THE SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT, AND INDEED THE WHOLE DEBATE ON POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT. AT THE SAME TIME THERE WERE TWO DANGEROUS VACUUMS - A POLITICAL VACUUM WHICH DELORS AND THE COMMISSION WERE TRYING TO FILL WITH PROPOSALS FOR STRENGTHENING AND WIDENING THE COMMISSION'S POWERS, AND A VACUUM OF

ACCOUNTABILITY WHICH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WAS TRYING TO FILL. THESE VACUUMS WERE ALREADY SUCKING IN UNSATISFACTORY PROPOSALS SUCH AS THOSE IN THE BELGIAN PAPER. AS PROGRESS WAS MADE ON EMU - WITH, THE FRENCH HOPED, A TREATY IN PLACE BY 1 JANUARY 1993 - AND ON THE SINGLE MARKET, THE VACUUMS WOULD GROW AND ENCOURAGE FURTHER UNDESIRABLE IDEAS FROM THE BELGIANS, ITALIANS AND OTHERS. ONE COULD FOR EXAMPLE, IMAGINE PRESSURE FOR A QUIET UNACCEPTABLE TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY FROM NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND PARLIAMENT TO THE COMMISSION AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT FOR SECURITY OR FOR BUDGETARY QUESTIONS.

5. BOISSIEU SAID THAT THE RIGHT WAY TO PREVENT THIS HAPPENING WAS TO START THINKING NOW ABOUT WAYS OF STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY LEVEL INSTITUTIONS, IN SUCH A WAY AS TO FEND OFF THE WILD IDEAS OF OTHERS, TO DEFUSE THE EP'S DEMANDS, AND TO PRESERVE A PROPER ROLE FOR NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS. THE FRENCH HAD NO FIRM IDEAS. NOR WERE THEY WORKING ANY UP WITH THE GERMANS. MITTERRAND'S PROMISE OF FRANCO-GERMAN PROPOSALS FOR DUBLIN HAD NEVER HAD ANY SUBSTANCE, AND NOW THAT RELATIONS WERE BETTER IT WAS NOT NEEDED ANYWAY. THE FRENCH WERE TALKING TO THE GERMANS AS THEY WERE NOW TALKING TO US. BOISSIEU'S OWN PRELIMINARY IDEAS, HOWEVER, WERE RUNNING ALONG TWO LINES:

- I. THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE COUNCIL, FOR EXAMPLE BY MAKING EXPLICIT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, AND THE FAC AND ECOFIN, FOR THE COMMUNITY'S EXTERNAL POLICIES, ON ALL AREAS NOT COVERED BY THE TREATY, AND ANY NEW AREAS OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITY, WITH THE COMMISSION'S ROLE LIMITED TO IMPLEMENTATION, WITHIN THEIR EXISTING COMPETENCE, AND BY EXPANDING THE COUNCIL SECRETARIAT TO SERVICE THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE FAC AND ECOFIN, IN THEIR EXPANDED ROLES, PERHAPS ABSORBING THE POCO SECRETARIAT.
- II. MINOR STRENGTHENING OF THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, FOR EXAMPLE BY GIVING IT A LIMITED POWER OF LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE (WITHOUT IN ANY WAY OBLIGING THE COUNCIL TO ACCEPT ITS PROPOSALS) IN CERTAIN AREAS COMING WITHIN THE TREATIES SUCH AS THE SINGLE MARKET - BUT NOT (NOT) AGRICULTURE OR EXTERNAL POLICY. AS FOR THE PRESIDENCY, BOISSIEU SAID THAT SIX MONTHS WAS TOO SHORT WHEN HELD BY THE FRENCH, BRITISH OR GERMANS BUT TWELVE MONTHS WAS TOO LONG WHEN HELD BY THE GREEKS OR PORTUGUESE. NOR WAS AN OUTSIDE PRESIDENT A GOOD IDEA. THERE WERE NO EASY SOLUTIONS.

6. BOISSIEU SAID HE WOULD NOT FAVOUR A DISCUSSION OF THESE ISSUES IN SUBSTANCE IN DUBLIN ON 28 APRIL, BUT THERE SHOULD BE DISCUSSION

OF PROCEDURE. IN THE FRENCH VIEW THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE A SEPARATE IGC ON INSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS, TO BE PREPARED BY FOREIGN MINISTERS. HE WOULD NOT FAVOUR A NEW DOOGUE COMMITTEE. THE IDEAL WOULD BE FOR THE EMU - IGC TO BE FINALISED BY MID-1991, THE WIDER INSTITUTIONAL IGC BY END-1991, (WHEN IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO VERIFY THE COMPATIBILITY OF THE OUTCOMES), WITH NECESSARY SUBSEQUENT STEPS INCLUDING RATIFICATION BY NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS COMPLETED BY END 1992. BOISSIEU STRESSED AGAIN THAT THESE WERE INFORMAL QUAI VIEWS: HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT LINE MITTERRAND WOULD TAKE. HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, EXPECT THE FRENCH TO TABLE ANY PROPOSALS ON INSTITUTIONAL REFORM BEFORE THE COUNCIL, EITHER ON THEIR OWN OR WITH THE GERMANS. HE AGREED TO LET KERR KNOW IF THE POSITION CHANGED BETWEEN NOW AND 28 APRIL.

7. KERR REPEATED THAT IT WOULD BE PRÉMATURE AND DIVISIVE TO SUBJECT THE COMMUNITY TO A FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW SO SOON AFTER THE SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT. MOREOVER IT WOULD BE A GREAT MISTAKE TO RAISE IN DUBLIN ON 28 APRIL THE ISSUES OF A SECOND IGC: IDEAS ON WHAT FURTHER INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE DIFFERED WIDELY ACROSS THE COMMUNITY - BOISSIEU'S IDEAS WERE, FOR EXAMPLE, RADICALLY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN THE BELGIAN MEMORANDUM, OR CURRENT IN BONN. THE SENSIBLE COURSE WOULD BE TO LEAVE THE FAC TO SIFT AND WEIGH ALL SUCH IDEAS OVER THE REST OF THE YEAR. BOISSIEU DID NOT DEMUR.

8. ON OTHER TOPICS FOR THE 28 APRIL EUROPEAN COUNCIL, BOISSIEU SAID THAT ON EC/GDR BROAD AGREEMENT SEEMED TO BE EMERGING THAT:

- I. THE NEGOTIATION WOULD BE OVER THE INTEGRATION INTO THE COMMUNITY OF THE EX-GDR AS PART OF A UNIFIED GERMANY, NOT OF THE GDR AS A SEPARATE STATE
- II. NO TREATY CHANGE WOULD BE NEEDED
- III. IT WOULD BE FOR THE GERMANS TO SEEK DEROGATIONS FOR THE EX-GDR, WHICH WOULD APPLY TO THAT TERRITORY ONLY (THE AQUIS COMMUNAUTAIRE IN RESPECT OF THE EXISTING FRG SHOULD NOT BE AFFECTED).
- IV. THE PROCESS SHOULD BE TRANSPARENT. A COMMUNIQUE ON THOSE LINES SHOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT. THERE WOULD ALSO NEED TO BE COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE ON EC RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES AND ON THE NEED NOT TO FORGET THE MEDITERRANEAN.

COMMENT

9. WE ARE INCLINED TO TAKE AT FACE VALUE BOISSIEU'S ASSURANCES THAT THERE IS NO FIRM FRENCH VIEW ON INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE, AND THAT THEY

ARE NOT CONCERTING WITH THE GERMANS ON ANY SUBSTANTIVE JOINT INSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS TO BE PUT FORWARD AT OR BEFORE THE 28 APRIL DUBLIN COUNCIL. INDEED IT WOULD BE HARD TO SEE WHAT THESE MIGHT BE GIVEN THE APPARENT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FRENCH APPROACH OF STRENGTHENING THE COUNCIL RATHER THAN THE COMMISSION OR PARLIAMENT AND THE GERMAN, OR AT LEAST AUSWARTIGES AMT WISH (TUR PARA 34) TO STRENGTHEN THE EP'S CONTROL OVER THE COUNCIL. BUT IF FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS SHOULD TAKE A PUBLIC DIVE BEFORE 28 APRIL, SOME JOINT PROPOSAL DESIGNED TO PAPER OVER THE CRACKS COULD NOT BE EXCLUDED.

10. THE MINISTER PLANS TO GO OVER SOME OF THE SAME GROUND WITH MADAME GUIGOU (ELYSEE) TOMORROW.

FERGUSON

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