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CORRECTED VERSION

CORRECTED VERSION

FRAME GENERAL

DUBLIN EUROPEAN COUNCIL: FRENCH APPROACH

SUMMARY

1. MITTERRAND WILL WANT A GOOD PRESS FROM THIS COUNCIL, BUILDING ON THE SUCCESS OF THE FRANCO-GERMAN SUMMIT, AND POSITIVE REACTIONS HERE TO LAST WEEK'S MESSAGE ON POLITICAL UNION. THIS TRANSLATES INTO WANTING PREPARATORY PROCEDURAL WORK FOR AN IGC LAUNCHED. ON THE SUBSTANCE OF POLITICAL UNION AS OPPOSED TO THE RHETORIC THE FRENCH BELIEVE THERE IS SIGNIFICANT COMMON GROUND BETWEEN US. OUR PREFERENCE FOR FOREIGN MINISTERS UNDERTAKING THE PREPARATORY WORK HAS BEEN NOTED.

2. MITTERRAND'S LINE ON GERMAN UNIFICATION AND EASTERN EUROPE LIKELY TO BE SOUND.

DETAIL

3. MITTERRAND WILL WANT A GOOD PRESS FROM THIS WEEKEND'S SUMMIT TO HELP PULL HIM OUT OF A PATCH OF DOMESTIC DIFFICULTY. THE FRENCH ECONOMY CONTINUES TO PERFORM WELL AND ROCARD'S PRAGMATIC POLICIES ARE STILL PICKING UP CREDIT. BUT THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL POPULARITY RATING, WHICH FOR THE PAST YEAR HAD BEEN JUST ABOVE ROCARD'S, TOOK A SUDDEN PLUNGE IN APRIL. THIS CAN PARTLY BE ATTRIBUTED TO MITTERRAND'S UNSUCCESSFUL AND HIGHLY PUBLICISED ATTEMPT IN MARCH TO INSTALL HIS FAVOURITE, FABIUS, AS SOCIALIST PARTY LEADER. PARTLY TOO TO RECENT CRITICISMS BY GISCARD AND OTHERS THAT HE IS DOING TOO LITTLE TO KEEP FRANCE AT THE CENTRE OF FAST-MOVING EVENTS IN EUROPE. THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION THUS CREATED OF A PRESIDENT OVER-CONCERNED ABOUT INTERNAL POLITICKING TO THE DETRIMENT OF WIDER FRENCH INTERESTS, IS ONE WHICH THE ELYSEE HAS BEEN ANXIOUS TO CORRECT. LAST WEEK'S JOINT DECLARATION WITH KOHL ON POLITICAL UNION MET MITTERRAND'S NEED FOR A HIGH PROFILE FRENCH EC INITIATIVE WITH A PAY-OFF IN JANUARY 1993, JUST BEFORE THE NEXT FRENCH LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. THIS HAS BEEN REINFORCED BY THE SUCCESSFUL RESTATEMENT OF FRANCO-GERMAN SOLIDARITY AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SUMMIT ON 26 APRIL.

POLITICAL UNION

4. OF THE AGENDA ITEMS, MITTERRAND WILL SEE POLITICAL UNION AS THE MOST IMPORTANT AND THE MOST CONTENTIOUS. HIS OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE IN CHAMPIONING POLITICAL UNION AT THIS POINT, WHATEVER THE WEIGHT BEHIND THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL ASPECTS, HAS BEEN TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE FRENCH AND GERMANS CAN STILL WORK TOGETHER IN THE CAUSE OF EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION. IT IS LARGELY A TACTICAL REACTION TO THE CRITICISM TO WHICH MITTERRAND HAS BEEN SUBJECTED IN PARLIAMENT AND THE PRESS FOR HAVING PUT RELATIONS WITH BONN IN JEOPARDY DURING THE LAST FEW MONTHS (NOTABLY THROUGH HIS RECEPTION OF LAFONTAINE SHORTLY BEFORE THE GDR ELECTIONS AND THE WAY IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THE POLES ON POST-WAR FRONTIERS). WHATEVER THEIR GUT REACTIONS MAYBE, THE APPEARANCE OF A SOLID FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP IS AS MUCH A REQUIREMENT TODAY AS IT HAS BEEN FOR DECADES (OF COURSE, THE ELYSEE PUT MUCH OF THE BLAME ON KOHL'S INSENSITIVITY AND TENDENCY TOWARDS OVER-CONFIDENCE). MITTERRAND WILL THEREFORE BE PLEASED THAT THE FRENCH PRESS HAVE PUT A FAVOURABLE CONSTRUCTION ON THE KOHL-MITTERRAND MESSAGE TO HAUGHEY, SEEING IT AS EVIDENCE THAT THE FRANCO-GERMAN COUPLE IS BACK IN BUSINESS. HE WILL WANT THE DUBLIN INFORMAL TO MAINTAIN IMPETUS THROUGH A PROCEDURAL DISCUSSION LEADING TO THE LAUNCH OF PREPARATORY WORK. MITTERRAND WILL BE ONLY TOO AWARE THAT SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION OF THE CONTENTS OF POLITICAL UNION WOULD ONLY BRING OUT FRENCH DIFFERENCES WITH THE GERMANS (BONN TELNO 501). HE MAY WELL, HOWEVER, WANT TO PRESENT SUCH A CONCLUSION AS MORE THAN JUST PROCEDURAL AND AS AN IMPORTANT STEP ALONG THE (UNDEFINED) ROAD TO POLITICAL UNION WHICH HE AND KOHL HAVE MAPPED OUT: SEE MY TEL ON THE FRANCO-GERMAN SUMMIT.

5. HOW FAR THE FRENCH WILL BE READY TO GO ALONG THE POLITICAL UNION ROAD WHEN PREPARATORY TALKS OR EVEN EVENTUALLY A SECOND IGC GET UNDER WAY, IS NOT YET CLEAR. BIANCO (ELYSEE) REAFFIRMED TO ME THIS MORNING THAT ON THE SUBSTANCE AS DISTINCT FROM THE RHETORIC THE FRENCH BELIEVE THAT THERE IS SIGNIFICANT COMMON GROUND BETWEEN US. ELYSEE AND QUAI OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY DO NOT WANT TO SEE ANY MAJOR INCREASE IN THE POWERS OF THE COMMISSION OR THE PARLIAMENT AND WANT TO SEE THE BALANCE SHIFTED, IF ANYTHING, TOWARDS THE COUNCIL AND A STRENGTHENED ROLE FOR NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS. WHATEVER THE RHETORIC MAY IMPLY, THE FRENCH ARE NOT PURSUING FEDERALIST IDEAS. OFFICIALS ACKNOWLEDGE AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE HERE WITH THE GERMANS. THEY ARE TOYING WITH SUCH IDEAS AS AN UPPER HOUSE ELECTED BY NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS, A STANDING COUNCIL OF MINISTERS FOR EC AFFAIRS, AND FOUR-YEAR PRESIDENCIES OF THE COUNCIL, BUT THEY ARE NOT YET WEDDED TO THEM. THEIR WISH TO STRENGTHEN THE POCO PROCESS AND EXTEND IT TO SECURITY ISSUES IS CONDITIONED BY A DETERMINATION TO RETAIN INDEPENDENCE OF DECISION OVER THE ESSENTIALS OF FOREIGN AND DEFENCE POLICY.

6. I DOUBT IF MITTERRAND HIMSELF HAS YET GONE INTO THE DETAILS THOUGH BIANCO SPOKE ABOUT ENHANCING COUNCIL CONTROL AND REINFORCING SUBSIDIARITY IN A WAY WHICH SHOWED CLEARLY THAT THIS WAS THE PRESIDENT'S OWN THINKING. NOR WILL HE WANT TO FOR A WHILE. HIS SHORT TERM AIM OF A PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION OF FRANCO-GERMAN TOGETHERNESS WILL BEST BE SERVED BY AVOIDING DETAIL AT THIS STAGE. SO WILL HIS LONGER TERM AIM OF ADVANCING EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION, - BOTH TO HIND IN THE GERMANS AND BECAUSE HE BELIEVES IN IT - ON WHICH HE IS AWARE THAT DOMESTIC OPINION MAY NOT BE AS SOLIDLY BEHIND HIM AS HE HAD ONCE SUPPOSED.

7. AS TO PROCEDURE, BIANCO TOOK NOTE OF OUR PREFERENCE THAT THE DUBLIN MEETING SHOULD ASK FOREIGN MINISTERS TO STUDY THE ISSUES RELATING TO A SECOND IGC AND TO REPORT TO THE COUNCIL AT THE END OF THE YEAR. THE FRENCH CLEARLY WOULD PREFER A FIRST REPORT AT LEAST AT THE 25/26 JUNE EUROPEAN COUNCIL: AND THEY FEARED THAT THE PRESSURES FOR ENTRUSTING THE WORK TO OTHERS (WISEMEN, COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ETC) MIGHT CARRY THE DAY. BUT BIANCO, WITHOUT COMMITTING HIMSELF, SPOKE AS THOUGH THE FRENCH PREFERENCE WOULD COME DOWN IN FAVOUR OF FOREIGN MINISTERS, WHO WERE THEMSELVES THE BEST EXPERTS AVAILABLE. IF THEY DID THE PRELIMINARY WORK, MUCH TIME WOULD BE SAVED.

GERMAN UNIFICATION

8. MITTERRAND'S LINE IN ANY DISCUSSION OF THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE COMMUNITY OF GERMAN UNIFICATION IS LIKELY TO BE SOUND. THE FRENCH, LIKE US, WANT THE INTEGRATION OF THE EX-GDR LANDER ACHIEVED AS QUICKLY AND AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE, WITH AS FEW TRANSITIONAL DEROGATIONS AS POSSIBLE, AND NO CHANGE IN THE ACQUIS FOR THE FRG. THEY SEE IT AS BEING UP TO THE GERMANS TO SEEK DEROGATIONS. THEY WILL EXPECT THE COMMISSION TO INVOLVE THE COUNCIL FULLY IN NEGOTIATIONS. OFFICIALS ARE TAKING THE LINE THAT IT DOES NOT MUCH MATTER WHETHER OR NOT A SPECIAL FUND IS SET UP TO CHANNEL PRE-UNIFICATION AID: THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT IT SHOULD NOT COME FROM THE STRUCTURAL FUNDS BUT FROM SOURCES ALLOCATED TO EASTERN EUROPE.

EASTERN EUROPE

9. OFFICIALS DO NOT EXPECT THE DISCUSSION ON EASTERN EUROPE TO BE CONTROVERSIAL. THEY CONSIDER THE COMMISSION'S PAPER SATISFACTORY. IN PARTICULAR THEY ARE CONTENT WITH ITS APPROACH TO CONDITIONALITY, A POINT ON WHICH THEY HAVE HAD DIFFICULTY WITH THE AMERICANS IN THE EBRD CONTEXT.

FERGUSSON

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PS/PUS	1
MR BAYNE	1
MR KERR	1
RESIDENT CLERK	1
HD/ECD(I)	3
HD/NEWS D	1
MR D A HADLEY CABINET OFFICE	1
MR B BENDER CABINET OFFICE	1
MR J OXONFORD CABINET OFFICE	1
MR L PARKER CABINET OFFICE	1
MR N L WICKS HMT	1
MR H P EVANS HMT	1
MR R ALLEN HMT	1
MR M. MERCER HMT	1
MR C ROBERTS DTI VIC ST	1
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352

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ADDITIONAL 1

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