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FM PARIS

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

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INFO IMMEDIATE MOSCOW, BONN, WASHINGTON, MODUK
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INFO ROUTINE OTHER CSCE POSTS

MOSCOW TELNO 994 TO FCO: MITTERRAND'S VISIT TO MOSCOW, 25 MAY

SUMMARY

1. QUAI CONFIRM ACCOUNT IN TUR. THE MAJORITY OF THE TALKS DEVOTED TO GERMAN AND PARTICULARLY UNITED GERMANY'S MEMBERSHIP OF NATO, ON WHICH GORBACHEV MAINTAINED A VERY TOUGH LINE. LESS RIGID, BUT EQUALLY EMOTIONAL, ON LITHUANIA.

DETAIL

2. DANON (DUMAS' CABINET) AND ROUDAUT (HEAD OF QUAI SOVIET DEPT) WHO ACCOMPANIED MITTERRAND TO MOSCOW HAVE CONFIRMED THE ACCOUNT IN TUR. THE VISIT FITTED INTO THE PATTERN OF ANNUAL BILATERAL SUMMITS (GORBACHEV VISITED FRANCE IN JULY 1989). ROUDAUT SAID THAT THE FRENCH HAD BEEN HOPING FOR A TWO-DAY VISIT, BUT SINCE MOSCOW HAD BEEN UNABLE TO OFFER AN APPROPRIATE SLOT BEFORE THE SUMMER, THEY HAD HAD TO SETTLE FOR A HALF-DAY. THE TALKS PLUS LUNCH HAD LASTED 5 HOURS. (LE FIGARO - RIGHT WING - COMMENTED SARCASTICALLY THAT THE BILATERAL LASTED ONLY SLIGHTLY LONGER THAN THE PRESS CONFERENCE).

3. ROUDAUT SAID THAT WHILE GORBACHEV HAD NOT GIVEN THE IMPRESSION OF HAVING HAD HIS BACK TO THE WALL ('AUX ABOIS') HE HAD BEEN TENSE AND EMOTIONAL OVER BOTH GERMAN MEMBERSHIP OF NATO AND LITHUANIA. GERMANY TOOK UP 80 PERCENT OF THE TIME AVAILABLE. GORBACHEV HAD MAINTAINED A VERY HARD LINE INSISTING THAT HE REFUSED TO BE PRESENTED WITH A FAIT ACCOMPLI. THERE WAS AN OBVIOUS LINK BETWEEN THIS ISSUE AND ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS. IF THE LATTER FAILED, IT WOULD BE THE WEST'S FAULT, NOT HIS. DANON CONFIRMED THAT GORBACHEV HAD MENTIONED AT THE END OF THE TALKS THE POSSIBILITY OF GERMAN MEMBERSHIP OF NATO QUOTE A LA FRANCAISE UNQUOTE, BUT ONLY IN AN ILLUSTRATIVE MANNER TOGETHER WITH OTHER MORE ABSURD IDEAS, SUCH AS JOINT MEMBERSHIP OF NATO AND THE WARSAW PACT. (COMMENT: THE RUSSIANS SEEM TO SEE THE FRENCH POSITION AS MORE DISTANCED FROM NATO THAN IT REALLY IS.) IN RESPONSE, MITTERRAND HAD MAINTAINED THE

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LINE THAT UNITED GERMANY WOULD BE IN NATO, SO GORBACHEV SHOULD MAKE THE MOST OF THE OTHER GUARANTEES AND ASSURANCES THAT WERE CURRENTLY ON OFFER. ROUDAUT SAID THAT CFE WAS NOT DISCUSSED IN DETAIL BUT THAT GORBACHEV HAD SAID THAT A 'RUPTURE IN THE PRESENT BALANCE' WOULD MEAN THAT THE CFE COULD NOT REACH A CONCLUSION.

4. THE SOVIET SIDE APPARENTLY PUT QUESTIONS ABOUT MITTERRAND'S PROPOSAL FOR A EUROPEAN CONFEDERATION, AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF THIS WITH THE COMMON EUROPEAN HOME (THE LATTER THEY DESCRIBED AS 'CONCEPTUAL', THE FORMER AS MORE 'LEGAL' (PARA 9 OF TUR) MITTERRAND MAINTAINED HIS VAGUE LINE THAT THE NATURE OF THE CONFEDERATION WOULD BECOME CLEARER AS THE SITUATION IN EUROPE DEVELOPED. BILATERAL QUESTIONS WERE REPORTEDLY DISCUSSED VERY BRIEFLY. THERE WAS A REFERENCE TO THE FRENCH PROGRAMME OF MANAGEMENT TRAINING. (ROUDAUT SAID THAT THE FRENCH WERE WORRIED BY THE LOW STANDARD OF THE CANDIDATES PROPOSED AND THE GENERAL SCEPTICISM OF FRENCH BUSINESS ABOUT GETTING INVOLVED). AN AGREEMENT ON AN EXCHANGE OF CONSULATES IN KIEV AND STRASBOURG WAS SIGNED.

5. DANON SAID THAT GORBACHEV ADOPTED A LESS RIGID (BUT STILL EMOTIONAL) TONE ON LITHUANIA. HE STUCK TO THE LINE THAT HE WAS READY TO NEGOTIATE AS SOON AS LITHUANIA FORMALLY RENOUNCED ITS DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. GORBACHEV HAD BEEN DISMISSIVE OF THE CAPABILITIES OF THE LITHUANIAN LEADERSHIP.

6. THE SOVIET EMBASSY HERE HAVE CONFIRMED TO US BY TELEPHONE THE ESSENCE OF THIS ACCOUNT DESCRIBING THE TALKS AS SIMPLY 'SUBSTANTIAL AND FRANK'. FRENCH PRESS COVERAGE HAS CONCENTRATED ON THE GERMAN ASPECT OF THE TALKS, TO THE EXCLUSION OF ALMOST ALL OTHER TOPICS. THE IMPRESSION HOWEVER IS OF A VISIT OF FORM MORE THAN SUBSTANCE, DRIVEN BY THE PERCEIVED DOMESTIC NEED FOR MITTERRAND TO BE SEEN TO BE ACTIVE ON THE EAST/WEST STAGE AND TO BE GETTING HIS OAR IN BEFORE GORBACHEV'S US VISIT AND THE KIEV MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

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