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TELNO 1696

OF 191600Z JUL 90

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GERMAN UNIFICATION: US VIEWS

SUMMARY

1. US PRESS FULL OF PRAISE FOR STAVROPOL, TEMPERED BY UNEASE AS TO THE LONGER TERM IMPLICATIONS. COMMENT ON BRITISH ATTITUDES TO GERMANY.

DETAIL

2. NEWS OF THE AGREEMENT OF STAVROPOL HAS BEEN GREETED BY THE US MEDIA WITH GREAT SATISFACTION AND HIGH TRIBUTES TO KOHL AND GORBACHEV. IN AN EDITORIAL WHICH IS TYPICAL, THE WASHINGTON POST SAID THAT FOR THE GERMANS THIS WAS A MILESTONE IN A YEAR OF MILESTONES. THE SOVIET UNION SOUGHT AND GOT THE BEST TERMS AVAILABLE FOR A STEP WHICH WAS BOUND TO BE TRAUMATIC. KOHL'S NO LESS STATESMANLIKE CONTRIBUTION WAS NOT SIMPLY TO SEIZE THE MOMENT BUT TO SEIZE IT IN A WAY THAT CALMED AND SATISFIED BOTH EAST AND WEST. THE NEW YORK TIMES BELIEVED THAT GORBACHEV SHOWED GREAT COURAGE AND KOHL HIGH STATESMANSHIP. THEY HAD FOUND A WAY TO BEGIN TRANSFORMING INTO REALITY THE VISION OF EUROPE ON WHICH PRESIDENT BUSH HAD LED THE WAY AT THE NATO SUMMIT.

3. BUT THERE ARE SIGNS OF UNEASE. APPLE (NEW YORK TIMES) SAID THAT THE US ADMINISTRATION WAS KEENLY AWARE OF THE SYMBOLISM OF THE FACT THAT THE AGREEMENT WAS WORKED OUT AT A BILATERAL MEETING IN THE CAUCASUS, ALBEIT ALONG LINES THE US HAD STRONGLY ENDORSED, WITH BUSH MORE THAN 5,000 MILES AWAY. HE QUOTED CONGRESSMAN LEE HAMILTON (D INDIANA) WHOSE VIEWS ON FOREIGN POLICY CARRY GREAT WEIGHT ON CAPITOL HILL: QUOTE THIS MAKES IT CLEARER THAN EVER THAT THE GERMANS ARE LEADING WESTERN POLICY TOWARDS THE SOVIET UNION. I AM NOT SAYING IT IS GEORGE BUSH'S FAULT, AND I AM NOT SAYING THAT WE HAVE BECOME A NON POWER. BUT THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE NEW MULTI-POLAR WORLD THAT IS GOING TO MAKE US LEARN A NEW MEANING FOR THE WORD CONSULT. THESE DAYS IT DOES NOT MEAN US GOING TO EUROPE AND TELLING THEM WHAT TO DO UNQUOTE. HOAGLAND (WASHINGTON POST) WROTE THAT ONE DID NOT HAVE TO BE AN OLD THINKER TO FEEL UNEASY ABOUT THE WEST GERMAN CHANCELLOR AND THE SOVIET PRESIDENT CASUALLY DISCLOSING THAT US, BRITISH AND FRENCH TROOPS WILL LEAVE BERLIN KOHL PRESENTED HIS AMERICAN

ALLIES WITH ANOTHER FAIT ACCOMPLI BY AGREEING TO A PERMANENT DE-NUCLEARISATION OF EAST GERMAN TERRITORY ... HIS UNILATERAL ANNOUNCEMENT DROVE HOME THE POINT THAT GERMANY WOULD DECIDE WHEN THE LAST VESTIGES OF THE WAR WERE TO BE REMOVED FROM ITS TERRITORY. IT WAS A TROUBLING DISPLAY OF THE KIND OF UNILATERALISM THAT THE GERMANS HAD DEMANDED THAT OTHERS NOT PRACTISE ON THEM. AND IT WAS TROUBLING THAT THE US GOVERNMENT LACKED THE GRIT AND VISION TO SAY SO. ROSENFELD (NEW YORK TIMES), WHO HAS LONG BEEN ALMOST BITTERLY SUSPICIOUS OF THE GERMANS, SAW THE WEST AND THE SOVIET UNION WATCHING SLACK MOUTHED AS KOHL WAVED AT THEM FROM HIS SPEEDING UNIFICATION STEAM ENGINE. UNIFICATION CREATED A DIFFERENT AND STRONGER GERMAN NATION. THE WEST HOPED THAT EUROPEAN ECONOMIC UNION WOULD CHAIN GERMANY DOWN, BUT IT WOULD ALSO MAKE GERMANY EVEN STRONGER. NONE OF THIS NEED BE A DISASTER QUOTE JUST AS LONG AS THE CURRENT SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC WAYS NEVER FADES AMONG GERMANS, JUST AS LONG AS THERE WILL NEVER BE A GERMAN LEADERSHIP THAT USES A CRISIS AS AN EXCUSE FOR GETTING ECONOMICALLY OR POLITICALLY NASTY WITH THE REST OF EUROPE UNQUOTE.

4. MR RIDLEY'S RESIGNATION HAS PROMPTED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF COMMENT ABOUT UK ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE GERMANS AND THE COMMUNITY. THE WALL STREET JOURNAL SAID THAT FOR MONTHS MRS THATCHER AND HER CABINET COLLEAGUES HAD BEEN STRUGGLING TO STIFLE SPECULATION THAT THEY HELD EXACTLY THE SAME (MR RIDLEY'S) OUTLANDISH VIEWS. HIS COMMENTS UNDERCUT ALL THAT CAREFUL DIPLOMACY. IN THE WASHINGTON POST HOAGLAND WROTE THAT MR RIDLEY HAD TO GO BECAUSE HE DISCLOSED THE PRIME MINISTER'S REAL VIEWS ACCURATELY AND IN GREAT DETAIL, AND HE CONCLUDED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S AGGRESSIVE ANTI EUROPEAN STANCE HAD BEEN SERIOUSLY WEAKENED. THE POST'S LONDON CORRESPONDENT WROTE THAT MR RIDLEY'S DEPARTURE UNDERScoreD THE PRIME MINISTER'S ISOLATION. REFERRING TO COMMENT IN BRITAIN THAT MRS THATCHER WAS ABLE TO GET AWAY WITH ANTI EUROPEAN RHETORIC AND TOUGH STANCES WHEN THE BRITISH ECONOMY WAS OUT-STRIPPING MOST OF EUROPE'S, HE CONCLUDED THAT BY THIS ACCOUNT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD HAVE TO BE MORE CAUTIOUS NOW THAT THE ECONOMY HAD SUFFERED A RELAPSE AND BUSH HAD COOLED AMERICA'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH BRITAIN.

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