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FM BONN

TO DESKBY 271700Z FCO

TELNO 902

OF 271609Z JULY 90

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, PARIS, MOSCOW, EAST BERLIN, BM BERLIN

INFO PRIORITY UKDEL NATO, UKREP BRUSSELS

MY TELNO 890 : POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

SUMMARY

1. CDU/CSU CONCEDE THAT THERE SHOULD BE ONLY ONE VOTING AREA FOR THE ALL-GERMAN ELECTIONS. BUT OTHER DETAILS ARE STILL NOT SETTLED, AND COULD PROVE CONTROVERSIAL.

DETAIL

2. IN A MEETING OF THE FRG GOVERNING COALITION ON 26 JULY, THE CDU/CSU ABANDONED THEIR EARLIER INSISTENCE THAT THE FIRST ALL-GERMAN ELECTIONS SHOULD BE HELD SEPARATELY IN THE FRG AND GDR. THEY AGREED THAT THEY SHOULD INSTEAD BE HELD IN A UNIFIED ELECTORAL AREA UNDER A UNIFIED ELECTORAL LAW. THE COMMITTEES ON GERMAN UNITY OF THE FEDERAL GERMAN AND THE GDR PARLIAMENTS MET IN BONN ON THE SAME DAY, AND REACHED THE SAME AGREEMENT.

3. BUT NO AGREEMENT WAS REACHED, EITHER IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COALITION, OR IN THE DISCUSSIONS OF THE COMMITTEES, ON HOW THE THRESHOLD FOR REPRESENTATION IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT SHOULD BE APPLIED. CURRENTLY, A PARTY IN THE FRG MUST NORMALLY GET MORE THAN 5 PER CENT OF ALL VOTES CAST THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY IF CANDIDATES FROM ITS LISTS IN THE INDIVIDUAL LAENDER ARE TO GET INTO THE PARLIAMENT UNDER THE PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM (MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ARE ALSO ELECTED DIRECTLY FROM CONSTITUENCIES, BUT IN PRACTICE THIS AFFECTS ONLY THE TWO BIGGEST PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS). THIS MEANS THAT A PARTY WOULD NEED ABOUT 2.5 MILLION VOTES AS A MINIMUM FOR REPRESENTATION IN AN ALL-GERMAN PARLIAMENT. BUT THE CDU/CSU ARGUED, BOTH IN THE COALITION DISCUSSIONS AND IN THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEES, THAT THE THRESHOLD SHOULD APPLY SEPARATELY LAND BY LAND THROUGHOUT THE FRG AND GDR, AS HAPPENED IN 1949 FOR THE FRG'S FIRST ELECTIONS. THIS WOULD FAVOUR SMALLER PARTIES WHICH CANNOT GET 5 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL VOTE ACROSS THE COUNTRY (5 PER CENT OF THE VOTE IN BREMEN, FOR EXAMPLE, IS AROUND ONLY 27,500 VOTES) AND THEY WERE SUPPORTED IN THE COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS BY THE GREENS, THE GDR'S DSU, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF SOME OF THE SMALL GDR CITIZENS' GROUPS/PARTIES.

4. THE FDP ARE SAID TO BE CONSIDERING THEIR POSITION. THE SPD ARE STICKING TO THEIR VIEW THAT THERE SHOULD BE A SINGLE GENERALLY APPLIED ALL-GERMAN THRESHOLD OF 5 PER CENT. BUT SOME SENIOR SPD FIGURES ARE CANVASSING THE IDEA OF A LOWER BUT STILL ALL-GERMAN GENERALLY APPLIED THRESHOLD, POSSIBLY OF 4 PER CENT (EVEN THOUGH IN PRACTICE NO PARTY WOULD STAND TO BENEFIT FROM THIS SMALL CHANGE), AND ONE HAS ALREADY COMMENTED THAT THE LAND BY LAND APPROACH IS 'CONSTITUTIONALLY POSSIBLE'.

5. THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMITTEE BOTH AGREED THAT THERE SHOULD BE A SEPARATE FRG/GDR AGREEMENT ON THE MODALITIES OF THE ELECTION. THE GOVERNMENT COALITION IS TO MEET AGAIN ON 31 JULY TO DECIDE ITS OWN POSITION. THE GDR GOVERNMENT WILL PRESUMABLY ALSO BE CONSIDERING URGENTLY WHAT TO DO NEXT. PRESS REPORTS HERE SUGGEST THAT DE MAIZIERE, IN LINE WITH THE WEST GERMAN CDU/CSU, ALSO NOW FAVOURS A LAND BY LAND APPLICATION OF THE THRESHOLD.

COMMENT

6. THE CDU'S DECISION TO ABANDON ITS CALL FOR TWO SEPARATE ELECTIONS WAS PROBABLY AN ATTEMPT TO BREAK OUT OF AN IMPASSE WITH WHICH THE PRESS AND PUBLIC OPINION HERE WERE GROWING INCREASINGLY IMPATIENT. A LAND BY LAND APPLICATION OF THE THRESHOLD WOULD ACHIEVE MUCH THE SAME PURPOSE AS THEIR EARLIER STAND, IN THAT IT WOULD ENABLE THE DSU, THE POORLY-PERFORMING SISTER PARTY OF THE BAVARIAN CSU, TO SQUEAK INTO THE NEW PARLIAMENT (REPORTS HERE SUGGEST THAT THE DSU WOULD BE LIKELY TO CLEAR A 5 PER CENT HURDLE IN SAXONY AND THURINGIA). BUT IT WOULD HAVE THE SAME DISADVANTAGE, IN THAT IT WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESSOR TO THE OLD COMMUNIST PARTY, THE PDS, ALSO TO GET INTO THE PARLIAMENT. THE FDP CONDEMNED THE CDU'S EARLIER LINE. REPORTS OF THE COALITION DISCUSSIONS YESTERDAY BROUGHT OUT THE FDP'S DESIRE NOT TO UPSET ANY FURTHER THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CDU. BUT IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THEY ARE REALLY READY TO SWALLOW THEIR DISTASTE FOR THE CDU/CSU'S GERRYMANDERING TACTICS.

6. THE LAND BY LAND APPROACH HAS THE FURTHER UNDESIRABLE EFFECT OF RE-OPENING THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE FAR-RIGHT REPUBLIKANER COULD GET INTO THE BUNDESTAG. NATIONALLY, THEIR SHARE OF THE VOTE IS PUT WELL BELOW 2 PER CENT, BUT THEY ARE THOUGHT TO HAVE AROUND 3 PER CENT IN BAVARIA WHERE MANY CSU MEMBERS ARE DISSATISFIED WITH WHAT THEY SEE AS THEIR LEADERSHIP'S OVER-READINESS TO KNUCKLE UNDER TO THE CDU. SCHOENHUBER, THE EX-SS MEMBER WHO IS NOW BACK IN CONTROL OF THE PARTY AFTER A PERIOD OF TURMOIL, HAS MADE CLEAR HIS INTENTION TO

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CONCENTRATE ALL HIS EFFORTS ON BAVARIA IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND WILL
HOPE TO PICK UP DISAFFECTED CSU VOTERS.

NEVILLE-JONES

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