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INFO IMMEDIATE UKREP BRUSSELS, PARIS

EMU: GERMAN AIMS AT THE STRASBOURG EUROPEAN COUNCIL

SUMMARY

1. GERMANS HAVE PUT A PROPOSAL TO THE FRENCH THAT AT STRASBOURG THERE SHOULD BE A DECISION ON A 'MANDATE' FOR EMU. PRECISE AIM UNCLEAR BUT SEEMS DESIGNED TO PUT OFF A DECISION ON CALLING AN IGC. KOHL PLAYING A CAREFUL GAME DOMESTICALLY. PLEASE PROTECT SENSITIVE INFORMATION.

DETAIL

2. HARTMANN (CHANCELLERY) TOLD THE MINISTER TODAY THAT KOHL HAD 'ELABORATED' TO MITTERRAND THE IDEA OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AGREEING A 'MANDATE' AT STRASBOURG ON ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION. HARTMANN AVOIDED SAYING EXPLICITLY THAT THE FRG WOULD REFUSE TO AGREE TO SETTING A DATE FOR THE CALLING OF AN IGC, BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THIS WAS THE STRONG GERMAN PREFERENCE. 'THE FRENCH', HARTMANN SAID, 'KNOW WHAT WE WANT. THERE NEEDS TO BE MUCH MORE PREPARATION BEFORE A DECISION ON AN IGC'. THE GUIGOU GROUP HAD ONLY ASKED QUESTIONS.

2. HARTMANN SAID THAT THERE WAS A SCHOOL OF THOUGHT IN THE FRG PRESSING TO GO NO FURTHER THAN LEARNING FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF STAGE I WITHOUT ANY COMMITMENT TO WHAT HAPPENED THEREAFTER AND WHEN. THIS WAS NOT CONSISTENT WITH DECISIONS AT MADRID AND IN ANY CASE THE CHANCELLOR WANTED TO KNOW WHERE THINGS WERE DESIGNED TO END. ASKED WHETHER THE MANDATE WAS INTENDED TO PREPARE FOR DECISIONS ON GOALS POST STAGE 1 OR ON THE CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED BEFORE MOVING BEYOND STAGE 1, HARTMANN'S ANSWER WAS CONFUSED. HE SEEMED TO THINK HE WAS TALKING ABOUT THE FIRST, THOUGH HE AGREED THAT IT WAS IN THE LOGIC OF HIS ARGUMENT FOR THE FRG TO BE EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN THE SECOND. HE REMARKED THAT THE AUSPICES FOR A MANDATE GROUP WOULD BE CRUCIAL. HIS PERSONAL VIEW WAS THAT IT SHOULD BE AN ECOFIN RESPONSIBILITY.

3. HARTMANN SAID HE WAS NOT SURE THERE WOULD BE A MINISTERIAL MEETING BEFORE STRASBOURG TO DECIDE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S

POSITION. THE CHANCELLOR MIGHT DECIDE TO ACT ON HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITY ON WHAT WERE PROCEDURAL ISSUES.

COMMENT

4. THIS LAST FAIRLY EXTRAORDINARY STATEMENT IS SYMPTOMATIC OF KOHL'S STRONG DESIRE TO DAMP DOWN THE DOMESTIC DEBATE ON EMU AND TO DEDRAMATISE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN AT STRASBOURG. HE MAY BE TRYING TO BYPASS THE VARIOUS CONTESTANTS - GENSCHER, WAIGEL ET AL RATHER THAN ENGAGE IN AN UNDOUBTEDLY DIFFICULT SEARCH FOR COMPROMISE. IF THIS TURNS OUT TO BE THE CASE, THE BRIEFING PUT TO HIM BY CHANCELLERY OFFICIALS WILL BE EXCEPTIONALLY IMPORTANT.

5. HARTMANN'S VAGUE ACCOUNT OF THE MANDATE IDEA MAY INDICATE PERSONAL UNFAMILIARITY WITH THE DETAIL, THE WORK HAVING BEEN DONE ELSEWHERE. IT MAY ALSO/INSTEAD INDICATE EMBRYONIC THINKING. IT WOULD BE IN LINE WITH THE GERMAN WAY OF OPERATING FOR THERE STILL TO BE A GREAT DEAL OF FLUIDITY IN THE PROPOSAL. AS DESCRIBED, IT DOES NOT, OF COURSE, PRECLUDE AN IGC BEING HELD IN 1990 IF THE MANDATE HAD BEEN COMPLETED - A POINT FOR THE FRENCH. BUT THE MANDATE IDEA DOES LOOK DESIGNED TO PUT OFF BEYOND STRASBOURG THE TAKING OF THAT DECISION.

6. GRATEFUL IF THE FOREGOING COULD BE PROTECTED. THE GERMANS HAVE NOT LET IT BE KNOWN THAT A PROPOSAL HAS BEEN PUT TO THE FRENCH.

7. FCO PLEASE ADVANCE TO NO 10.

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