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FM PARIS

[COLLAR]

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 993

OF 141701Z NOVEMBER 85

INFO SAVING WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, WELLINGTON, BONN, ROME,
INFO SAVING UKREP BRUSSELS, UKMIS NEW YORK.

MY TELNO 962 (NOT TO ALL): THE ANGLO FRENCH SUMMIT.

SUMMARY

1. MITTERRAND IS TO GIVE A PRESS CONFERENCE ON 21 NOVEMBER. FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES ARE LIKELY TO BE PROMINENT, BUT THE TIMING IS PROMPTED BY INTERNAL POLITICAL FACTORS.

DETAIL.

2. THE ELYSEE HAS ANNOUNCED THAT MITTERRAND WILL GIVE A PRESS CONFERENCE ON 21 NOVEMBER, HIS FOURTH SINCE BECOMING PRESIDENT IN 1981.

3. THE TIMING MEANS THAT FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES ARE LIKELY TO LOOM LARGE. THE CONFERENCE WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THE ANGLO-FRENCH AND REAGAN/GORBACHEV SUMMITS, AND JUST BEFORE THE TURENCE COUPLE ARE SENTENCED IN NEW ZEALAND FOR THEIR PART IN THE GREENPEACE AFFAIR. MITTERRAND WILL HOPE TO CAPITALISE ON PRESS INTEREST IN THESE EVENTS TO PRESENT HIMSELF AS AN AUTHORITATIVE AND INFLUENTIAL FIGURE ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE.

4. BUT THE DECISION TO HOLD THE CONFERENCE IS PROBABLY PROMPTED BY INTERNAL RATHER THAN EXTERNAL FACTORS. FABIUS' UNEXPECTEDLY POOR PERFORMANCE IN HIS TELEVISED DEBATE WITH CHIRAC (MANNING'S LETTER OF 29 OCTOBER TO CLARKE, WED) HAS DAMAGED THE SOCIALISTS, AND HAS LED TO A DECLINE IN BOTH HIS AND THE PRESIDENT'S POLL RATINGS. THE PRESS CONFERENCE WILL GIVE MITTERRAND THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRY TO MAKE GOOD THE DAMAGE.

5. IT WILL ALSO GIVE HIM THE CHANCE, BEFORE THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN GETS FULLY INTO ITS STRIDE, TO TALK ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR 1986-89. HE IS LIKELY TO PROMOTE HIMSELF AS A UNIFYING FIGURE, ABOVE AND BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE POLITICAL FRAY, WHO INTENDS TO COMPLETE HIS PRESIDENTIAL TERM AND EXERCISE HIS FULL CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS WHATEVER THE RESULT OF THE ELECTIONS NEXT MARCH (TUR).

FRETWELL

FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING ADDRESSEES

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

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