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TO DESKBY 260800Z FCO

TELNO 386

OF 251740Z APRIL 88

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SUMMARY

1. RUPERT SCHOLZ SEEMS ALMOST CERTAIN TO BE NAMED AS SUCCESSOR TO WOERNER. A BERLIN SENATOR WITH NO NATIONAL REPUTATION AND NO EXPERIENCE OF DEFENCE.

DETAIL

2. THE GERMAN PRESS AGENCY REPORTS THAT KOHL WILL TOMORROW ANNOUNCE THAT PROFESSOR DR RUPERT SCHOLZ WILL SUCCEED WOERNER. RELIABLE JOURNALISTS HAVE HAD THIS CONFIRMED BY THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE OFF THE RECORD, AND THE FMOD TELL US THAT THEY TAKE THE NEWS AS 95 PERCENT CERTAIN.

3. SCHOLZ (SEE LPR PAGE 125) WAS BORN IN 1937. HE WAS FIRST APPOINTED BERLIN SENATOR FOR JUSTICE IN 1981, AND HAS BEEN SENATOR FOR RELATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. HE JOINED THE CDU IN 1983. BEFORE JOINING THE BERLIN GOVERNMENT HE WAS A PROFESSOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW, PARTICULARLY ECONOMIC. HE HAS NO BACKGROUND IN DEFENCE. HE IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE BUNDESTAG.

4. WOERNER IS DUE TO HANDOVER TO HIS SUCCESSOR ON 18 MAY. NO OTHER CABINET CHANGES ARE NECESSARY OR RUMOURED.

COMMENT

5. ASSUMING THIS IS TRUE, IT IS A BIG SURPRISE. SCHOLZ WAS BY NO MEANS A LEADING CANDIDATE. SEVERAL COMMENTATORS HAVE EXPRESSED DISMAY THAT A LITTLE KNOWN OUTSIDER SHOULD GET A KEY MINISTRY. IT LOOKS AS THOUGH A TOUGH DEFENCE MINISTER WITH VIEWS CLOSE TO OURS IS TO BE REPLACED BY A LARGELY UNKNOWN QUANTITY WHOSE DEALINGS WITH THE ALLIES IN HIS BERLIN JOB WERE NOT ALWAYS EASY, AND AT A TIME WHEN MANY DIFFICULT ISSUES, NOTABLY SNF, ARE AHEAD.

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6. FURTHER COMMENT FOLLOWS ONCE THE NOMINATION IS CONFIRMED.

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1. RUPERT SCHOLZ HAS GROWN IN STATURE ON THE POLITICAL SCENE IN THE PAST TWO YEARS OR SO. HE HAS WON RESPECT IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR HIS ROBUST DEBATING STYLE AND HIS CAREFULLY THOUGHT OUT PRESENTATION OF HIS CASE. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN ALLIED MEDIATION BUREAU IN BERLIN WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE MADE SHORTLY WILL NO DOUBT BE CONSIDERED HIS CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT. HOWEVER HIS RUNNING OF THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HERE HAS APPARENTLY BEEN PRETTY CHAOTIC AND HE HAS RARELY KEPT HIS OFFICIALS INFORMED OF WHAT HE WAS UP TO.
2. HE HAS ALSO MATURED IN HIS DEALINGS WITH THE ALLIES. ALTHOUGH HE CAN BE ERRATIC AND OCCASIONALLY RATHER EMOTIONAL SCHOLZ HAS TURNED INTO A MORE RELIABLE PERSON TO DEAL WITH THAN WAS THE CASE A FEW YEARS AGO. HIS PUBLIC UTTERANCES ON BERLIN STATUS QUESTION ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE OCCASIONALLY STRAINED FOR EFFECT HAVE BEEN GENERALLY HELPFUL IN FURTHERING UNDERSTANDING OF THE ALLIED POSITION.
3. PERSONALLY RUPERT SCHOLZ TAKES SOME GETTING TO KNOW POSSIBLY BECAUSE HE IS A VERY GERMAN GERMAN AND HE SPEAKS NEGLIGIBLE ENGLISH. HE TAKES LITTLE CARE WITH HIS APPEARANCE AND IS USUALLY HAPPIEST WHEN EXTENDED IN AN ARMCHAIR AND PULLING ON AN EVIL-SMELLING CHEROOT WHILE HOLDING FORTH IN A PHILOSOPHICAL VEIN. FANCIES HIMSELF AS A WIT. HE HAS BETRAYED NO PARTICULAR INTEREST IN DEFENCE QUESTION IN OUR PRESENCE AND NOT GONE OUT OF HIS WAY TO ATTEND ALLIED PARADES. A MAN WHO PREFERS AN EVENING OUT WITH THE LADS RATHER THAN A FORMAL DINNER. IN HIS SPARE TIME HE IS A FANATICAL FOOTBALL SUPPORTER WHO HAS BEEN TRYING TO REVIVE THE FAILING FORTUNES OF THE BERLIN FOOTBALL CLUBS.
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