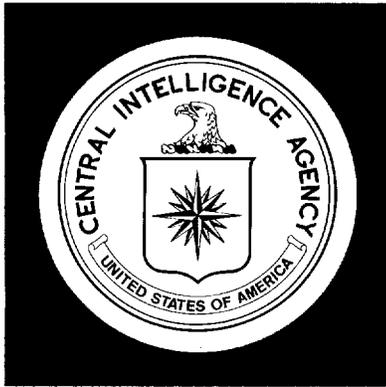


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EC-US: DESPITE THE EVIDENT WILLINGNESS OF THE EC MEMBER GOVERNMENTS TO MOVE ALONG IN DRAFTING A DECLARATION ON US-EUROPEAN RELATIONS, THE EUROPEANS ARE OBDURATE ABOUT MAINTAINING THEIR DISTINCTIVENESS WITHIN ANY CONCEPT OF AN ATLANTIC COMMUNITY.

DURING EARLY STAGES OF THE NEGOTIATIONS ON A DECLARATION OF ATLANTIC PRINCIPLES, THE EUROPEANS TENDED TO ATTRIBUTE ANY RELUCTANCE TO ACCEDE TO US POSITIONS TO FRENCH OBSTINACY. NOW, AS EVIDENT IN THE LATEST ROUND OF US-EC CONSULTATIONS LAST WEEK, THE NINE ARE PRESENTING A MORE UNITED FRONT, DEFENDING A NUMBER OF FRENCH POSITIONS AS COMMON TO THE NINE.

ALL APPARENTLY AGREE THAT THE US-EC DECLARATION SHOULD NOT TRY TO DEAL WITH THE ENTIRE RANGE OF THE RELATIONSHIP. THEY OPPOSE ANY EXPLICIT AFFIRMATION OF THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF MONETARY, TRADE, DEFENSE, AND POLITICAL QUESTIONS.

WHILE INSISTING THAT ANY JOINT DECLARATION REFLECT EUROPE'S SEPARATE IDENTITY, THE NINE APPARENTLY ALSO AGREE THAT THE EC CANNOT BE COMMITTED TO MORE DEFINITE ACTIONS THAN THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY'S AUTHORITY WOULD ALLOW.

THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST PROBABLY HAS STRENGTHENED EUROPEAN RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE DESIRABILITY OF ESTABLISHING TOO CLOSE AN IDENTITY WITH THE US ON A BROAD RANGE OF ISSUES, BECAUSE THEIR OWN INTERESTS COULD BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED. A KEY LUXEMBOURG OFFICIAL HAS TOLD THE US EMBASSY THAT CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EC AND THE US MIGHT NOT BE "REALISTIC" IN THE LIGHT OF CLOSE US-USSR BILATERAL RELATIONS. ALLUDING TO US AND SOVIET COOPERATION IN THE UN ON THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS, HE QUESTIONED WHETHER EC MEMBER STATES COULD EVEN EXPECT TO BE FULLY INFORMED. A HIGH-RANKING FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL, MEANWHILE, WAS "ALMOST EMOTIONAL" EARLIER THIS WEEK IN REJECTING US ARGUMENTS IN NATO ABOUT THE NEED FOR WESTERN SOLIDARITY IN THE FACE OF THE SOVIET SUPPLY OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

THE EC POLITICAL DIRECTORS WILL MEET NEXT ON THE US-EC DECLARATION IN COPENHAGEN ON 12 AND 13 NOVEMBER.

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