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NEW FRENCH MINISTER FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

SUMMARY.

1. MITTERRAND HAS APPOINTED ONE OF HIS CLOSE PERSONAL CONFIDANTS AS MINISTER FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS IN SUCCESSION TO CHANDERNAGOR.

DETAIL

2. THE ELYSEE ANNOUNCED ON 18 DECEMBER THE APPOINTMENT OF ROLAND DUMAS, THE 61 YEAR OLD SOCIALIST DEPUTY FOR PERIGUEUX IN THE DORDOGNE, AS MINISTER FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS. UNLIKE CHANDERNAGOR, DUMAS WILL HAVE FULL MINISTERIAL STATUS AND WILL THEREFORE SIT AS OF RIGHT IN THE WEEKLY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. HE WILL PRESUMABLY TAKE CHARGE OF THE SGCI BUT THE DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS BETWEEN DUMAS AND CHEYSSON IS NOT YET CLEAR NOR IS IT EVIDENT HOW THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC SIDE OF THE QUAI WILL RELATE TO DUMAS.

3. DUMAS IS ONE OF MITTERRAND'S CLOSEST AND LONGEST STANDING POLITICAL ALLIES. SINCE THE DAYS OF THE FOURTH REPUBLIC HE HAS STOOD BY MITTERRAND IN ALL THE UPS AND DOWNS OF THE LATTER'S POLITICAL CAREER. A LAWYER BY TRAINING, HE HAS COMBINED POLITICS AND POLITICAL JOURNALISM WITH A SUCCESSFUL CAREER AT THE PARIS BAR. HE HAS ACTED AS COUNSEL IN MANY OF THE POLITICALLY CONTROVERSIAL TRIALS UNDER THE FIFTH REPUBLIC EG THE BEN BARKA AND DE BROGLIE AFFAIRS.

4. HIS APPOINTMENT CLEARLY OWES MORE TO HIS LOYALTY TO MITTERRAND THAN TO HIS STANDING IN THE SOCIALIST PARTY WHERE HIS CLOSENESS TO THE PRESIDENT HAS OFTEN AROUSED JEALOUSY AMONG THOSE EXCLUDED FROM MITTERRAND'S INNER CIRCLE. DUMAS HIMSELF, ALTHOUGH ELECTED ON A SOCIALIST TICKET IN 1981, HAS STEERED CLEAR OF PARTISAN POLITICS - HIS FIRST ALLEGIANCE IS TO MITTERRAND RATHER THAN TO THE PARTY. IN RECOGNITION OF THIS LOYALTY MITTERRAND HAS OFTEN USED HIM AS AN EMISSARY ON DELICATE POLITICAL MISSIONS. IN RECENT MONTHS HE HAS VISITED QADHAFI AND BONGO ON MITTERRAND'S BEHALF.

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5. ALTHOUGH DUMAS HAS TAKEN A CLOSE INTEREST IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST, HE HAS NO KNOWN EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS. HE WAS NOT A MEMBER OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMISSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. HE WAS A GRADUATE STUDENT AT THE LSE BUT HAS SHOWN NO SIGNS OF BEING AN ANGLOPHILE. HIS FATHER WAS SHOT BY THE GERMANS.

6. HE HAS NO PREVIOUS MINISTERIAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE, BUT HIS CLOSENESS TO MITTERRAND WILL GIVE HIM MORE AUTHORITY IN RELATION TO OTHER MINISTERS THAN CHANDERNAGOR ENJOYED.

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