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ECONOMIC SUMMIT: FRENCH VIEWS ON NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE *ms*

SUMMARY

1. ATTALI HINTS AT FRENCH AMBITIONS FOR A RENEWED NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE.

DETAIL

2. IN AN INTERVIEW IN TODAY'S LIBERATION DESIGNED TO COUNTER CRITICISM OF THE DECISION TO HOLD THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT AT THE SAME TIME AS THE BICENTENARY CELEBRATIONS, THEREBY ORIENTING THEM TOWARDS THE RICH AND POWERFUL RATHER THAN THE POOR AND DEPRIVED, ATTALI (FRENCH SHERPA) WAS ASKED WHETHER THE FRENCH HAD TRIED BUT FAILED TO ORGANISE, IN EFFECT, A NORTH-SOUTH SUMMIT. ATTALI DENIED THAT THIS HAD EVER BEEN THE FRENCH INTENTION (QUOTE THESE THINGS TAKE SEVERAL YEARS TO ORGANISE UNQUOTE). BUT HE DREW ATTENTION TO THE REAL BENEFIT TO NORTH AND SOUTH THAT WOULD FLOW FROM THE MANY NORTH/SOUTH BILATERALS THAT WOULD TAKE PLACE IN THE MARGINS OF THE SUMMIT/CELEBRATIONS, INCLUDING THOSE, FOR EXAMPLE, BETWEEN THE MEXICAN PRESIDENT AND REPRESENTATIVES OF CREDITOR COUNTRIES, AND THE PRESIDENT OF BANGLADESH AND THOSE CONCERNED WITH FLOOD RELIEF THERE.

3. ASKED ABOUT THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE WELL-ESTABLISHED AND WELL-ORGANISED G7 PROCESS, AND THE MUCH LESS EFFECTIVE NORTH-SOUTH COORDINATION MECHANISMS, ATTALI STRESSED THAT FRANCE HAD ALWAYS WORKED HARD FOR BETTER NORTH/SOUTH UNDERSTANDING IN THE RELEVANT INSTITUTIONS (UN, IFIS ETC) ADDING, HOWEVER, THAT QUOTE THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT NORTH/SOUTH SUMMITS ARE DEAD. FRANCE IS KEEPING OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF TAKING AN INITIATIVE IN THIS SENSE WHEN THE TIME IS RIPE UNQUOTE. ASKED WHEN THAT MIGHT BE, ATTALI REPLIED THAT QUOTE SINCE 1981 FRANCE HAS WANTED TO SEE CONDITIONS CREATED WHICH WOULD ALLOW REGULAR AND CONSTANT DIALOGUE BETWEEN INDUSTRIALISED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. WE ARE WORKING ON IT. I CAN'T SAY MORE FOR THE MOMENT UNQUOTE.

COMMENT

4. THIS LEAVES THE WAY OPEN FOR SOME SORT OF FRENCH INITIATIVE AT

THE SUMMIT - EG ON THE LINES OF JAY'S TELELETTER OF 26 JUNE TO RICHARDSON (ERD) - BUT EQUALLY, BY STRESSING THE SUBSTANCE IN THE VARIOUS BILATERALS, GIVES THE FRENCH A LET OUT IF NOTHING MATERIALISES.

FERGUSSON

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