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Director of Central Intelligence

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Wednesday, 21 November 1990



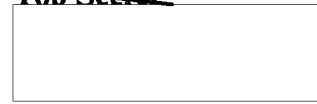
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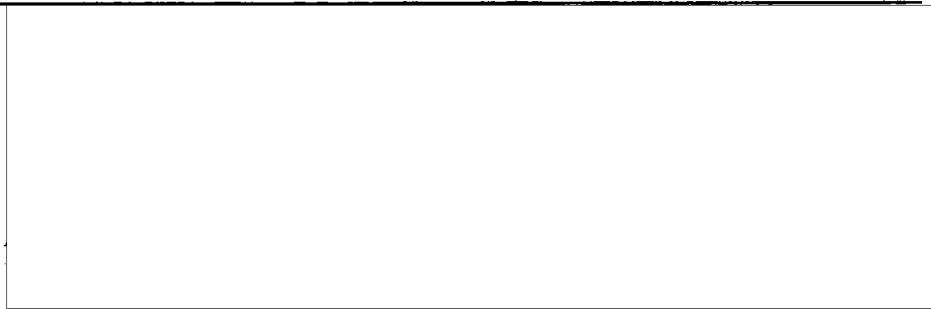


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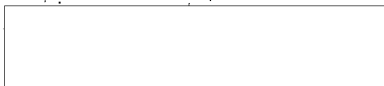


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UK:

Another Blow for Thatcher

Michael Heseltine's surprisingly strong showing in the Tory party leadership vote yesterday has thrown party managers into disarray and increased doubts about Prime Minister Thatcher's ability to win in the second round of voting next Tuesday, especially if other challengers come forward. [redacted]

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Thatcher received 204 votes, four short of what she needed to defeat Heseltine on the first ballot. His 152 votes were more than generally predicted; there were only 16 abstentions. Thatcher immediately announced she would contest a second round, preempting any speculation that she would resign. Heseltine also announced his intention to persevere, and press reports indicate other candidates have until tomorrow to come forward. [redacted]

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Comment: A third candidate would probably make it impossible for either Thatcher or Heseltine to win a second vote. Foreign Secretary Hurd, in particular, would have been popular as a compromise candidate, but he and Chancellor of the Exchequer Major have ruled out entering the second round. A darkhorse candidate may, however, still step forward. [redacted]

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Heseltine faces an uphill struggle to gain a majority on the second round, but his candidacy may be gaining momentum. Recent opinion polls giving the Tories a better chance under his leadership in the next election probably helped sway many votes and could yet persuade more. He may also benefit from the reported anger of senior Tories over Thatcher's decision to press ahead without first consulting them. [redacted]

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The vote yesterday is good news for the Labor Party because it suggests a deep split among Tories that neither Thatcher nor Heseltine might be able to repair before the next general election. Thatcher's position, in particular, is likely to weaken further even if she manages to hang on. [redacted] CIA, DIA-

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UK's Thatcher Still Determined

Thatcher's prompt announcement of her intention to contest the next round may have offended some of her supporters; press reports indicate her closest advisers expected to be consulted on the matter. Her decision, however, is characteristic: she has always considered herself to be a warrior and once compared herself to Abraham Lincoln, noting that he too had to fight for what he believed in. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] She undoubtedly would view retreat from the held at this point as an act of cowardice and a betrayal of all she has fought for during the past 11 years. Nevertheless, although she publicly expressed satisfaction at the outcome, her customary self-confidence seemed forced.

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