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Prime Minister.

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PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE USA, 16-18 DECEMBER

1. THERE IS NO NEED FOR TIME OR REFLECTION TO DESCRIBE THE EFFECT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT UPON OFFICIAL AND PUBLIC OPINION HERE.

2. A MEMBER OF THE WHITE HOUSE SAID PRIVATELY AFTERWARDS THAT THE DISCUSSION THERE HAD BEEN THE BEST HE HAD EVER ATTENDED. THIS REFLECTS WHAT I KNOW, FROM OTHER CONVERSATIONS I HAVE HAD, ABOUT THE FAVOURABLE VIEW ON THE AMERICAN SIDE SO FAR AS THE OFFICIAL BUSINESS WAS CONCERNED. THE PRIME MINISTER'S UNEQUIVOCAL PROMISE OF SUPPORT ON IRAN UNDER CHAPTER VII, GIVEN AT THE OUTSET OF THE MEETING, WAS LIKE A TRUMPET-BLAST OF CHEER TO A GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE BADLY IN NEED OF REASSURANCE FROM THEIR ALLIES.

3. THE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THE RHODESIA CONFERENCE BRIGHTENED THE SETTING, THE NEW YORK TIMES DESCRIBED YOUR NEGOTIATING TACTICS AS QUOTE ARTFUL UNQUOTE, A WORD INTENDED AS A COMPLIMENT IN THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE. PRAISE WAS BEAMED UPON YOU ON ALL OCCASIONS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE.

4. I WOULD RATE HIGHLY THE PUBLIC IMPACT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRESENCE HERE. THERE WAS GREAT INTEREST IN HER BEFOREHAND AND PLENTY OF GOODWILL PILING UP IN ADVANCE. I AM SURE THAT THE RESULTS DISAPPOINTED NOONE. ONE SENIOR SENATOR WHO HAD BEEN PRESENT FOR THE MEETING ON THE HILL SAID AT A SOCIAL GATHERING I ATTENDED LAST NIGHT, AND HE SAID IT THREE TIMES, QUOTE I DO NOT RECALL ANY VISITOR TO THE USA WHO HAS MADE SUCH AN IMPACT UNQUOTE. I ASKED WHETHER HE WAS REFERRING TO VISITORS TO CONGRESS. QUOTE NO, UNQUOTE HE REPLIED, QUOTE I MEAN ANY VISITOR ANYWHERE TO THE UNITED STATES UNQUOTE. HE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN TO THE COMPANY THAT HE WAS NOT SPEAKING ONLY FOR HIMSELF, BECAUSE HE HAD DISCUSSED THE PRIME MINISTER WITH MANY OTHER SENATORS, AND THATC WHAT HAD STRUCK THEM ALL WAS QUOTE THE CANDOUR, THE DIRECT SIMPLICITY OF, THE LANGUAGE AND THE PROCESS OF THOUGHT IMPARTED WITH THE ORDERLINESS OF SOLDIERS IN THE LINE UNQUOTE.

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5. THERE WAS NO MISTAKING THE ENTHUSIASM GENERATED BY THE PRIME MINISTER'S PUBLIC APPEARANCES IN NEW YORK: HER VISIT TO THE RESEARCH ESTABLISHMENT, DOGGED BY A BUS-LOAD OF JOURNALISTS: HER SPEECH TO THE FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION LUNCH, THE BIGGEST THEY HAVE EVER ORGANISED, THOUGH THEY ARE REGULARLY ADDRESSED BY HEADS OF GOVERNMENTS, WITH WELL OVER 2000 PEOPLE PRESENT: AND THE DINNER ARRANGED BY MR DAVID ROCKEFELLER ATTENDED BY THE HEADS OF 130 MAJOR US FIRMS WHO, THOUGH THEY HAD EXPECTED TO HEAR SENTIMENTS OF WHICH THEY APPROVED, WERE ENLIVENED BY THE CONFIDENT AND FORTH-RIGHT WAY IN WHICH THEY WERE EXPRESSED.

6. PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION COVERAGE HAS BEEN INTENSE. THE PRIME MINISTER'S SUPPORT OVER IRAN HAS BEEN THE LEADING TOPIC. AFTER TWO OF THE THREE MAJOR TELEVISION NETWORKS HAD BOOKED INTERVIEWS, THE THIRD INSISTED ON EQUAL ACCESS WITH THE RESULT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER APPEARED ON ALL THREE MORNING PROGRAMMES AT PEAK VIEWING TIME. RADIO INTERVIEWS WERE USED BY ALL THE RADIO NETWORKS THROUGH-OUT THE COUNTRY COVERING 6000 STATIONS. RESTON'S WIDELY SYNDICATED COLUMN, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES IN THE UK, IS UNSTINTED IN PRAISE OF MRS THATCHER'S QUOTE ABILITY TO USE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TO REDUCE THE DIVERSITY AND COMPLEXITY OF CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS ... AND TO COMMAND THE ATTENTION AND RESPECT OF HER AUDIENCE. UNQUOTE

7. YOUR OWN 30 MINUTE TV INTERVIEW ON THE MACNEIL/LEHRER PROGRAMME ALSO HAD EXTENSIVE AND REPEATED COVERAGE, WITH EMPHASIS ON YOUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUCCESSFUL RHODESIA SETTLEMENT. I THOUGHT THAT YOUR SEPARATE MEETING WITH VANCE WAS USEFUL, REVEALING AS IT DID U S CONCERN THAT OUR RESPONSE ON VOLUNTARY FINANCIAL MEASURES AGAINST IRAN MAY BE LESS FORTHCOMING THAN THOSE OF THE FRG OR FRANCE. THEY FULLY RECOGNISE THAT WE ARE MORE INVOLVED BECAUSE LONDON IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT AS A FINANCIAL CENTRE BUT THEY LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY BELIEVED THAT SOMETHING MORE COULD BE DONE WITHOUT JEOPARDISING BRITISH INTERESTS. I MIGHT ADD THAT THIS POINT HAS BEEN MADE TO ME SUBSEQUENTLY, WITH THE SUGGESTION THAT IT WOULD SEEM UNFAIR IF FRANCE AND GERMANY GOT MORE DIPLOMATIC CREDIT THAN WE DID.

8. I SHALL NOT DUPLICATE HERE THE RECORDS THAT WILL BE PRODUCED ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S TALK WITH THE PRESIDENT AND WITH THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE. ON THE LATTER I WOULD PICK OUT HAROLD BROWN'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE POLITICAL HELP AND ADVICE THE U S CAN GET FROM US ON SENSITIVE SPOTS OUTSIDE THE NATO AREA, FOR

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EXAMPLE OMAN AND THE CARIBBEAN. HE ALSO HINTED AT U S INTEREST IN EXPANDING THEIR USE OF DIEGO GARCIA BEYOND THE AREAS AND FUNCTIONS DEFINED IN THE PRESENT AGREEMENT. THE PRIME MINISTER PUT DOWN FIRM MARKERS ABOUT AV8B, RAPIER, GIANT VIPER AND THE 81 MM MORTAR; AND SHE UNDERLINED THE NEED TO OFF-SET THE GREAT IMBALANCE IN UK/US DEFENCE TRADE.

9. FROM THE MEETING AT THE WHITE HOUSE I WOULD SELECT FOR MENTION HERE THE PRESIDENT'S RELATIVE OPTIMISM ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST AND HIS STATEMENT THAT HE WOULD NOT MIND IF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES GOT CLOSER TO THE PLO. AS REGARDS ARMS FOR THE RUC THE PRESIDENT PASSED THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR AMERICAN FAILURE TO SUPPLY TO SPEAKER O'NEILL SAYING THAT HE HAD ENOUGH SUPPORT IN CONGRESS TO PREVENT THIS. MR CARTER SAID THAT MRS THATCHER HAD CONVINCED HIM ON THE SUBJECT AND HE ADVISED HER QUOTE TO SPEAK TO TIP O'NEILL ABOUT IT UNQUOTE. (WE HAVE HEARD SUBSEQUENTLY THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS TRIED TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE SPEAKER SINCE HE SAW THE PRIME MINISTER BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS - ALTHOUGH O'NEILL HAS BEEN NO LESS ENTHUSIASTIC THAN OTHER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ABOUT THE PM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE HILL AND WAS PLEASED BY WHAT SHE HAD TO SAY ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND IN GENERAL).

10. IN CONCLUSION, YOU WILL WANT TO KNOW WHAT THE EFFECTS OF THIS VISIT ARE GOING TO BE. IRAN, OF COURSE, DOMINATES ALL AMERICAN SENTIMENT AND WE WILL BE JUDGED BY HOW MUCH WE LIVE UP TO OUR WORD. BUT, WITH THAT IMPORTANT PROVISIO IN MIND, I AM CONFIDENT THAT, EVEN ALLOWING FOR HUMAN FRAILTY AND POLITICAL VOLATILITY, THE EFFECTS OF THE VISIT SHOULD BE TO HELP US TO GET OUR WAY WITH THE US ADMINISTRATION AND TO ENHANCE OUR INTERESTS SO FAR AS CONGRESSIONAL AND U S PUBLIC OPINION ARE CONCERNED. ONCE THE RHODESIA PROBLEM IS OUT OF THE WAY OTHER ISSUES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE WILL GAIN MORE ATTENTION FROM US BUT THIS SHOULD NOT LEAD TO ANY IMPAIRMENT OF THE FRAMEWORK IN WHICH WE WORK WITH WASHINGTON. I AM IN NO DOUBT THAT THE PRESIDENT'S INNER CONVICTION THAT BRITAIN, THROUGH ITS PRIME MINISTER, IS HIS SOUNDEST INTERNATIONAL PARTNER WAS FORTIFIED BY THE DOWN-TO-EARTH UNPOLEMICAL DISCUSSION HE HAD WITH HER AND THAT THE IMPACT SHE MADE DIRECTLY UPON CONGRESS AND THROUGH THE MEDIA UPON AMERICAN OPINION WILL ENHANCE OUR WORKING BASE IN THIS COUNTRY.

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