

GRS 445

UNCLASSIFIED

FM PARIS 011320Z NDEC 79

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 926 OF 01 DECEMBER 1979

INFO PRIORITY OTHER EEC POSTS

EUROPEAN COUNCIL; FRENCH PRESS

1. THIS MORNING'S PRESS PRESENTS THE MEETING AS A FAILURE WHICH JUST AVOIDED BEING A CRISIS. PRESIDENT GISCARD'S REMARK THAT THE SUMMIT QUOTE NARROWLY AVOIDED CATASTROPHE UNQUOTE IS WIDELY QUOTED. THERE IS MUCH STRESS ON THE COMMON FRONT OF THE EIGHT IN FACE OF WHAT WAS SEEN AS THE PRIME MINISTER'S INTRANSIGENCE. TYPICAL HEADLINES ARE: QUOTE ENGLAND-EUROPE: DEADLOCK UNQUOTE (MATIN - SOCIALIST); QUOTE AFTER THE FAILURE OF THE DUBLIN SUMMIT: THE CONTINENT ISOLATED UNQUOTE (QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS - INDEPENDENT).

2. THERE IS A GENERAL EXPECTATION IN THE PRESS THAT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL WILL BRING FORWARD ITS NEXT MEETING TO FEBRUARY AND THAT FISH, MUTTON AND ENERGY WILL THEN ALSO BE ON THE TABLE FOR THE DISCUSSION. PRESIDENT GISCARD'S INSISTENCE THAT THE FIRST TWO MUST BE DISCUSSED IS HIGHLIGHTED. THE RADIO THIS MORNING GAVE PROMINENCE TO A STATEMENT BY A LEADING FRENCH AGRICULTURALIST THAT NO TEARS WOULD BE SHED IF BRITAIN LEFT THE COMMUNITY.

3. AN INTERESTING EDITORIAL IN THE FIGARO BY SERGE MAFFERT COMMENTS THAT ALTHOUGH THE MEETING ENDED IN A HARDENING OF POSITIONS ON EITHER SIDE, IT WAS REASONABLE TO HOPE EVENTUALLY FOR A COMPROMISE: QUOTE TO ACCUSE MRS THATCHER OF WISHING TO TORPEDO EUROPE BECAUSE SHE DEFENDS THE INTERESTS OF HER COUNTRY WITH GREAT DETERMINATION IS TO QUESTION HER UNDERLYING INTENTIONS IN THE SAME WAY THAT PEOPLE USED TO QUESTION THOSE OF DE GAULLE IN REGARD TO FRENCH INTERESTS. BRITAIN WANTS MANY THINGS INCLUDING, NO DOUBT, A FAR-REACHING MODIFICATION OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY FOR WHICH FRANCE FOUGHT SO HARD. THERE IS NOTHING TO SHOW THAT SHE WANTS TO TURN THE COMMUNITY INTO A MERE FREE TRADE AREA UNQUOTE. HE SUGGESTS THAT MRS THATCHER, WHO IS NOT YET USED TO COMMUNITY HABITS AND MENTALITIES, UNDER-ESTIMATED THE RESISTANCE SHE WOULD FACE IN DUBLIN. IN DEMANDING ALL OR NOTHING SO CATEGORICALLY, SHE CONSOLIDATED HER PARTNERS IN A FRONT WHICH FOR ONCE WAS NOT DIRECTED AGAINST FRANCE. IF THE BRITISH DID NOT TAKE ACCOUNT OF THEIR PARTNER'S PREOCCUPATIONS, THE MEETING PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY MIGHT SOUND THE DEATH KNELL OF THE COMMUNITY. THIS WOULD BE IN NOBODY'S INTEREST.

4. HUMANITE (COMMUNIST) CONTINUES ITS LINE THAT GISCARD IS PREPARING A SELL-OUT OF FRENCH INTERESTS, SUGGESTING THAT AGREEMENT ON THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL TO REDUCE THE BRITISH BUDGET BY £348 MILLION HAS SIMPLY BEEN POSTPONED.

5. THERE IS GENERAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT THE MEETING ACHIEVED VERY LITTLE ON OTHER FRONTS, ALTHOUGH MOST PAPERS MENTION THE STATEMENT ON IRAN. LE MATIN COMMENTS THAT QUOTE AT THE MOMENT WHEN WESTERN ECONOMIES ARE AGAIN ON THE EDGE OF A GULF AND THE INTERNATIONAL FOOD SITUATION IS CATASTROPHIC, ONE COULD HAVE HOPED FOR MORE FROM THE LEADERS OF EUROPE THAN WHAT MUST BE CALLED A DISCUSSION BETWEEN SHOP-KEEPERS. THE GRAND EUROPEAN AMBITION MAY PERHAPS HAVE DIED AT DUBLIN UNQUOTE.

HIBBERT

FCO WHITCHALL DIST:

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