

GRS 330  
UNCLASSIFIED  
FM BONN 291600Z FEB 80  
TO ROUTINE FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 210 OF 29 FEBRUARY  
INFO EC POSTS, WASHINGTON, TOKYO, OECD, RIF3B DOI

① *Calculate*  
② *Keep: Be with return*

PRIME MINISTER'S PANORAMA INTERVIEW: GERMAN PRESS REACTIONS

1. THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS ON THE COMMUNITY BUDGET ON 25 FEBRUARY CAUSED A FLURRY OF UNFAVOURABLE PRESS COVERAGE THE FOLLOWING DAY. BUT YOUR REMARKS AND THOSE OF HERR GENSCHER AT YOUR JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE IN BONN THAT EVENING EFFECTIVELY SERVED TO KILL THE STORY BY 27 FEBRUARY.
2. THE INITIAL GERMAN PRESS REACTION WAS EPITOMISED BY SUCH HEADLINES AS QUOTE MARGARET THATCHER THREATENS THE EC UNQUOTE (SUEDEDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG) AND QUOTE LONDON THREATENS COMMUNITY WITH CONTRIBUTION FREEZE UNQUOTE (FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU). A NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS PICKED UP THE CRITICISM MADE BY BRUNO FRIEDRICH, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS AMOUNTED TO BLACKMAIL.
3. COMMENT TENDED TO BE EQUALLY UNFAVOURABLE: QUOTE THATCHER IS ABOUT TO REPEAT A MISTAKE THAT BROUGHT ABOUT HER FIRST MAJOR POLITICAL DEFEAT UNQUOTE (FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG), A REFERENCE TO DUBLIN. SOME COMMENTATORS CONCEDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE BURDEN ON THE UK UNDER PRESENT CONTRIBUTORY ARRANGEMENTS WAS TOO HIGH, ALTHOUGH OUR PRESENT DEMANDS WERE UNREALISTIC. DIE WELT SUGGESTED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S QUOTE THREAT UNQUOTE WAS NOT MEANT SO SERIOUSLY SINCE SHE HAD ADMITTED THAT THE UK WOULD BE VIOLATING THE LAW IF PAYMENTS WERE WITHHELD. SHE WOULD NOT RISK AN UNCOUPLING FROM THE EC.
4. BY 27 FEBRUARY THE STORY WAS PUT IN PERSPECTIVE. THE GENERAL ANZEIGER REFERRED TO YOUR REMARK AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE THAT MRS THATCHER HAD MERELY ANSWERED A HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION, AND THAT THE IMPORTANT MATTER WAS TO FIND A SOLUTION. WRITING FROM LONDON, GRUNDINSKI OF THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG QUOTED OFFICIAL CIRCLES AS SAYING THAT MORE HAD BEEN READ INTO MRS THATCHER'S CRITICAL STATEMENTS THAN WAS JUSTIFIED BY THE COURSE OF THE INTERVIEW. THE SHARPNESS WAS IN THE QUESTIONS AND NOT IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S ANSWERS.

WRIGHT

[THIS TELEGRAM WAS NOT ADVANCED]

FILES

ECD (I)

FRD

WED

ECON D

PS/LPS

PS/PUS

LORD BRIDGES

MR HANNAY

MR EVANS

COPIES TO

TREASURY (MISS WRIGHT RM18/G)

MR ELLIOTT

MR HORNE

MR S RAY ODA

} CABINET OFFICE