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CONFIDENTIAL

FM PARIS φ91844Z NOV 79

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 8φ8 OF φ9 NOVEMBER 1979

Pl send this copy  
personal + conf to  
Mr Alexander at N° 10  
IRAB  
/x

P E R S O N A L F O R P S / P U S

YOUR TEL NO 471: PRESIDENT GISCARD'S CHAIR

1. I TOOK THIS UP WITH JACQUES WAHL THIS AFTERNOON AND TO MY SUPRI SE ENCOUNTERED CONSIDERABLE RESISTANCE. HIS FIRST REACTION WAS TO THINK THAT THE OBVIOUS SOLUTION WAS TO STAND THE PRIME MINISTER'S CHAIR IN A CORNER AND HAVE HER SEATED ON THE SAME SORT OF CHAIR AS THE PRESIDENT. HE THOUGHT THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD HAVE A FEELING OF SUPRI SE IF IT WERE OTHERWISE.
2. I SAID THAT I THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE AN EVEN GREATER FEELING OF SUPRI SE ON OUR SIDE, AND SPREAD OVER A FAR WIDER NUMBER OF PEOPLE, IF THE PRESIDENT WERE TO FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT A ARRANGEMENT WHICH HAD BEEN ACCEPTED OVER VERY MANY YEARS BY HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT FROM ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD WHO HAD VISITED NO 1φ.
3. IN THE END HE SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO THE MATTER FURTHER. THE DECISIVE CONSIDERATION MIGHT BE WHETHER OTHER FRENCH PRESIDENTS OR PRESIDENT GISCARD HIMSELF HAD PREVIOUSLY ACCEPTED THE SEATING ARRANGEMENT WITHOUT COMMENT. I WAS ABLE TO DRAW HIS ATTENTION TO THE 1976 PRECEDENT OF PRESIDENT GISCARD HIMSELF. QUOTE DIEU SOIT LOUE UNQUOTE HE SAID . HE FELT BOUND TO CONSULT FURTHER WITH THE HEAD OF PROTOCOL AND WOULD LET US HAVE FURTHER COMMENT ON MONDAY. HIBBERT