

SUBJECT

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master.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 June 1981

Dear Francis,

CALL BY DR. FENECH ADAMI

Dr. Fenech Adami, the Leader of the Opposition Nationalist Party in Malta, called on the Prime Minister this afternoon. He was accompanied by Mr. Cachia-Caruana.

Dr. Fenech Adami told the Prime Minister that he was confident that the Nationalist Party would win the forthcoming election. Mr. Mintoff had recently lost ground politically in Malta. In reply to a question from the Prime Minister, Dr. Adami said that he believed that there would be a reasonably fair and free election. Mr. Mintoff would no doubt try to fiddle the results but he would not want to be seen to be doing so too blatantly. The Nationalist Party had made it plain that it was prepared to defend itself if attacked: since they did so (at the time when Dr. Adami's wife was attacked) they had experienced less trouble. The attitude of the police, in particular, was improving. They were evidently anticipating the possibility of a change of Government following the election.

Dr. Adami said that the Nationalist Party regarded Mr. Mintoff's agreement with Italy as sensible insofar as it improved Maltese links with Western Europe. However, they disagreed with Mr. Mintoff's efforts to secure the neutralisation of Malta. They did not agree that Malta's position should be equidistant from East and West.

Dr. Adami said that the Nationalist Party favoured membership of the European Community provided the terms were right. Mr. Mintoff did not appear to have made up his mind. He would shortly be sending a Minister to Brussels to renegotiate the terms of the EC/Malta Association Agreement which had expired at the end of 1980. Mr. Mintoff had recently claimed that he had been asked by the European Commission in 1979 whether he wanted membership of the Community and replied that he did not. Pressure should be put on him by the Community in the course of the renegotiation of the Association Agreement to make his position on the question of membership absolutely clear.

/ Dr. Adami

CONFIDENTIAL

Dr. Adami described the background to his visit earlier this year to Libya. He said that his impression was that relations between Colonel Gadhafi and Mr. Mintoff had completely broken down. Dr. Adami claimed the credit for Colonel Gadhafi's decision to lift the Libyan trade boycott against Malta. He said that Colonel Gadhafi had been very critical of Mr. Mintoff and had related a number of unflattering stories about him.

Of Mr. Mintoff's decision to allow Soviet ships to bunker in Malta, Dr. Adami said that Mr. Mintoff appeared indifferent to the fact that the decision was a breach of the spirit of his agreement with Italy. Mr. Mintoff's position was that it was no business of his what use the Soviet ships made of the oil they had taken on board once they left Malta's territorial waters.

Yours ever

Richard Alexander

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