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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 613 OF 17 NOVEMBER

INFO SAVING TO WASHINGTON, EC POSTS AND UKDEL NATO

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO ITALY: MIPT

1. I CALLED ON THE FOREIGN MINISTER SIGNOR COLOMBO ON 17 NOVEMBER.
2. HE SAID THE AGENDA WE HAD PROPOSED WAS PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE TO HIM. (HE DID NOT, AS THE POLITICAL DIRECTOR DID ON SATURDAY MORNING NOTE THAT WE HAD OMITTED AFRICA).
3. FOR HIS PART, HE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU AN ACCOUNT OF HIS RECENT VISIT TO MOSCOW AND ALSO OF HIS CONVERSATIONS IN WARSAW. THE ITALIANS THOUGHT WE SHOULD ALL HELP THE POLES. THEY WANTED REPHASING OF THEIR DEBTS FOR 1981 TO 1983 AND ADDITIONAL CREDITS MEANWHILE. HE HAD TOLD GROMYKO THAT ITALY WOULD HELP POLAND IF ASKED BUT THIS WAS NOT AN INTERVENTION IN POLAND'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS.
4. HE WOULD ALSO BE GLAD TO GIVE HIS IMPRESSIONS OF MADRID. HE THOUGHT IT WAS WORTH WHILE HAVING GONE. WE MUST MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE RUSSIANS TO PUT ANY BLAME ON THE WESTERN CAMP.
5. HE GAVE ME A LECTURE ABOUT NOT EXCLUDING ITALY FROM ANY FUTURE GUADELOUPE-TYPE CONFERENCE. I REPLIED IN THE SAME TERMS AS YOU DID TO THE RECENT REPRESENTATIONS OF AMBASSADOR CAGIATI IN LONDON. COLOMBO REPLIED HOWEVER THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THE RUMOURS. HE SAID, IN LANGUAGE THAT WAS STRONG FOR HIM, THAT ITALY DID NOT WANT ANY MORE OF THIS. IN PARTICULAR IT WAS VERY EMBARRASSING DOMESTICALLY AND THE COMMUNISTS AND RADICALS EXPLOITED THESE SITUATIONS. THE ITALIANS WERE TIRED OF BEING REFERRED FROM ONE PARTNER TO ANOTHER. THE PRACTICE COULD EASILY BE STOPPED IF THERE WAS A WILL. THIS WOULD CERTAINLY BE RAISED WITH MRS THATCHER.

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/ 6. I ASKED

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6. I ASKED SIGNOR COLOMBO WHETHER THERE WOULD BE ANY CHANGES IN ITALIAN POLICY BECAUSE OF SIGNOR FORLANI'S NEED TO PREVENT THE PCI FROM MAKING TOO MUCH TROUBLE. THEY WERE FOR EXAMPLE ALWAYS ASKING FOR CONSULTATION ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS. SIGNOR COLOMBO GAVE A MOST CATEGORICAL ASSURANCE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE IN THE ORIENTATION OF ITALIAN FOREIGN POLICY. IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT THEY MIGHT GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF TALKING TO THE PCI BUT NOTHING HAD BEEN DECIDED. THERE WAS NO NEED FOR ANY CHANGE AND THERE WOULD BE NONE. HOWEVER THEY DID WANT TO AVOID THE EMBARRASSMENT OF INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS FROM WHICH ITALY WAS EXCLUDED.

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