

J D N Hartland-Swann Esq
BRITISH EMBASSY
BRUSSELS

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| RECEIVED CHANCERY NO. 13 | |
| 15 OCT 1979 | |
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11 October 1979

ANGLO/ITALIAN CONSULTATIONS

1. When Julian Bullard lunched yesterday with the Belgian Ambassador, M. Vaes told him that he was under instructions to register a protest with the FCO at the decision, reported in the media and confirmed to Brussels by the Italians, to hold Anglo/Italian consultations at the level of Heads of Government, twice a year in future. The Ambassador recalled that the Belgians were determined to pursue the goal of European unity in a political sense; they therefore regarded any institutionalization of contacts between small groups or pairs as a bad thing. There now appeared to be agreement for bilateral consultations between the British, the French, Germans and Italians, leaving out the rest of the Community. The Belgian Government wished to register its disapproval of this state of affairs.
2. Julian Bullard indicated to M. Vaes that the initiative for the institutionalization of Anglo/Italian contacts had come from the Italian side, but that it was correct that the Prime Minister had agreed to this proposal. Bilateral meetings of this kind were simply a fact of life and had to be accepted by those who were excepted from them.
3. The Ambassador did not make a great deal of this protest but warned that the matter might be raised at today's meeting of Political Directors in Dublin.

S J Hilton
Western European Department

cc: Chancery: Rome
UKREP Brussels
Chancery: Bonn

CONFIDENTIAL

(85)

Mr Vereker
Mr Gladstone

Mr Vereker 24/8 Rm 16/10
The para on p. 3 of the transcript you
attach does not quite say that. I & other
records do, may I see them.

R. 16/10

ANGLO/ITALIAN SUMMITS

1. Please see para 3 of the press conference transcript attached.
2. It is clear from the records of Mrs Thatcher's discussions in Rome that there are to be 2 bilaterals with Italy each year. (as a matter of fact, Sgr Cossiga agreed with the Germans that the same practice should be established with them during his subsequent visit to the FRG). I recall your saying that this might be the subject of some sensitivity with our other European partners. News Dept have asked me whether it is a matter of public information that we are planning six-monthly meetings with the Italians. It seems to me that we have little option but to go ahead and confirm we are.
3. Do you agree?

Ronald Nash

R P Nash

Western European Department

16 October 1979

Mr Darnley (News Dept)

is for O.K.!

KD Darnley 17/10

Mr Nash

Since (a) the enclosed extract from the Press Conference text tells short of saying so;

(b) the other records you have now shown me are far v. restricted distribution; and

(c) I fully agree with the point at A above,

- I think it would be wise for the present to go no further than the H.M. did in her Press Conference.

R.

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17/10