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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

10 December 1981

Dear John,

UN Secretary General

/ I attach Sir Anthony Parsons's telegram No 510 of today's date.

We shall be consulting the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary about this telegram overnight, and are recommending that he should endorse the course of action proposed by Sir Anthony Parsons. Inter alia, this would mean that Sir Anthony Parsons would be ready if necessary to cast a veto against the four candidates listed in paragraph 7(c) of the telegram.

I should be grateful if you could let me know on the morning of 11 December if the Prime Minister has any objections to the line which, subject to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's views, we propose to take in New York.

yours etc

Roderic Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing St

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 December 1981

UN Secretary General

You wrote to me on 10 December about the course of action which Sir Anthony Parsons proposed to take in the next stage of this election. In a separate letter you propose a draft reply to the message which the Prime Minister had received from the President of Guyana concerning the candidature of Mr. Ramphal.

As I told you earlier on the telephone, the Prime Minister is content for Sir Anthony Parsons to proceed as he recommends (on the assumption that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary is also content). The Prime Minister has also approved the draft reply to the President of Guyana.

ALC

Roderic Lyne, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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FROM UKMIS NEW YORK 101530Z DEC 81
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1510 DATED 10 DECEMBER 81
AND TO UKDEL NATO

H D O N D

YOUR TELNO 853 AND MY TELNO 1508: ELECTION OF UN SECRETARY
GENERAL

1. IN THE ROUND OF ACTIVITY WHICH IS TO BEGIN IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL TOMORROW MORNING (11 DECEMBER), WE SHOULD, I SUGGEST, HAVE TWO PARALLEL OBJECTIVES. THE FIRST IS TO TRY TO ENSURE THAT THIS ROUND PRODUCES AGREEMENT IN THE COUNCIL ON A RECOMMENDATION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. IF WE DO NOT DO SO, THERE WILL BE AN INCREASED RISK THAT THE COUNCIL WILL DRIFT INTO TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF WALDHEIM OR SOME OTHER STOP-GAP ARRANGEMENT AND/OR THAT THERE WILL BE A DAMAGING CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND THE ASSEMBLY. THERE WOULD ALSO BE THE RISK THAT CASTANEDA WOULD ENTER THE CONTEST, WITH THE PROBLEMS THAT WOULD BRING US (THOUGH MRS KIRKPATRICK TOLD ME YESTERDAY IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE THAT THE US WOULD VETO HIM IF HE CAME TO THE VOTE; SHE MADE NO ATTEMPT TO SEEK MY COMPANY IN DOING SO),
2. OUR SECOND, AND EQUALLY IMPORTANT, OBJECTIVE IS OF COURSE TO TRY TO ENSURE THE ELECTION OF THE BEST POSSIBLE SECRETARY GENERAL, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF UK AND WESTERN INTERESTS. OF THE NINE CANDIDATES WE NOW HAVE, FOUR ARE BUFFOONS AND NOT TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. YOU ALREADY HAVE MY VIEWS ON ILLUECA AND RAMPHUL. FROM WHAT LITTLE WE CAN LEARN HERE BOTH AROSEMENA-MONROY AND QUIJANO-CABALLERO FALL INTO THE GROTESQUE/BUFFOON CATEGORY. OF THE REMAINING FIVE, IT HAS ALREADY BEEN AGREED IN EARLIER CORRESPONDENCE THAT SADRUDDIN, PEREZ DE CUELLAR AND ORTIZ DE ROSAS WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE SECRETARIES GENERAL, IN THAT ORDER OF PREFERENCE.

3. THAT LEAVES RAMPHAL AND SALAS. MY OWN VIEW ON RAMPHAL IS THAT HE WOULD BE AS COMPETENT A SECRETARY GENERAL AS WE CAN EXPECT TO GET, THOUGH NOT ONE WITH WHOM WE WOULD ALWAYS FIND IT COMFORTABLE TO LIVE: I NOTE FROM WILLIAMS' TELELETTER UN 010/6 9 DECEMBER THAT IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES YOU MIGHT BE PREPARED TO VOTE FOR HIM. AS FOR SALAS, HE IS A SMOOTH AND PLAUSIBLE OPERATOR IN THE UN CONTEXT. HE IS HIGHLY AMERICANISED, GOOD AT PUBLIC RELATIONS AND AT FUND RAISING, BUT NOT TO BE TRUSTED, FROM WHAT LITTLE I HAVE SEEN AND HEARD OF HIM. I RATHER DOUBT WHETHER HE WOULD COMMAND THE RESPECT THE JOB REQUIRES AND I DO NOT THINK THAT WE SHOULD DO ANYTHING TO ENCOURAGE HIS CANDIDACY. BUT IF (WHICH I THINK VERY UNLIKELY) HE WERE THE ONLY ONE OF THE PRESENT CANDIDATES WHO SEEMED LIKELY TO OBTAIN NINE VOTES AND ESCAPE THE VETO, ACCEPTING HIM AS SECRETARY GENERAL MIGHT BE A LESSER EVIL THAN FAILING TO PRODUCE A RESULT AT ALL (PARAGRAPH 1 ABOVE).

4. THE FIRST STAGE IN THE COUNCIL'S CONSIDERATION OF THESE NINE CANDIDATES WILL BE THE INFORMAL SOUNDINGS AT TOMORROW MORNING'S MEETING. THE SCENARIO FOR THESE WILL BE A LITTLE DIFFERENT FROM THAT ON WHICH THE INSTRUCTIONS IN YOUR TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE WERE BASED, IN THAT I SHALL HAVE TO MARK TWO PAPERS, ONE INDICATING THOSE CANDIDATES WE WOULD "ENCOURAGE", IE VOTE FOR IN A FORMAL BALLOT, AND THE OTHER INDICATING THOSE WE WOULD "DISCOURAGE", IE VOTE AGAINST. I THINK WE MUST ASSUME THAT INTERESTED OBSERVERS WILL BE ABLE TO WORK OUT AFTER THE EVENT WHICH OF THE PERMANENT MEMBERS "DISCOURAGED" WHICH CANDIDATES BUT WE CAN BE REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT OUR MARKS ON THE OTHER PAPER WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL.

5. AGAINST THAT BACKGROUND I RECOMMEND THAT I SHOULD "DISCOURAGE" ALL FOUR BUFFOONS. IT IS EQUALLY CLEAR THAT I SHOULD "ENCOURAGE" BOTH OUR PREFERRED CANDIDATES (SADRUDDIN, PEREZ DE CUELLAR). GIVEN OUR PREFERENCE FOR THE FIRST TWO NAMED OVER ORTIZ-DE-ROSAS AND OUR DOUBTS ABOUT RAMPHAL, I PROPOSE THAT I SHOULD NOT "ENCOURAGE" THEM AND THAT I SHOULD SIMILARLY ABSTAIN ON SALAS.

6. IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER THE COUNCIL WILL PROCEED TO FORMAL VOTING TOMORROW (YOUR TELNO 863). CTUNNU DID NOT LAY DOWN ANY PRECISE TIMETABLE FOR THE DAY'S PROCEEDINGS. HE IS HOWEVER VERY KEEN THAT WE SHOULD START FORMAL VOTING ON FRIDAY AND IS MAKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR INSTANT CONSULTATION OF THE CANDIDATES AFTER THE INFORMAL SOUNDINGS. WE MAY THEREFORE BE VOTING ON FRIDAY AND I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR INSTRUCTIONS FOR THAT EVENTUALITY.

7. FOR THE PURPOSES OF FORMAL BALLOTING, I SUGGEST THAT WE SHOULD DIVIDE THE CANDIDATES INTO THREE CATEGORIES:

A. OUR PREFERRED CANDIDATES: SADRUDDIN AND PEREZ DE CUELLAR IN THAT ORDER:

B CANDIDATES WHOM WE COULD TOLERATE AS SECRETARY GENERAL BUT WHO ARE NOT OUR PREFERRED CHOICE: ORTIZ DE ROSAS, RAMPHAL AND SALAS, IN THAT ORDER:

C CANDIDATES WHO WOULD BE INTOLERABLE AS SECRETARY GENERAL AND WHOM IT WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE FOR US, AS A PERMANENT MEMBER, NOT TO VOTE AGAINST: ILLUECA, RAMPHUL, ARESMENA-MONROY, QUIJANO-CABALLERO. WE HAVE A REPUTATION HERE FOR SERIOUSNESS, MORE SO THAN THE FRENCH. IF WE WERE KNOWN TO HAVE ABSTAINED ON SUCH CANDIDATES ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THEY WOULD NOT GET NINE VOTES, A LOT OF PEOPLE HERE WOULD SNEER AT US FOR GOING TO SUCH A LENGTH TO SAFEGUARD BILATERAL INTERESTS.

8. I RECOMMEND THAT IN THE FIRST BALLOT I SHOULD VOTE IN FAVOUR OF CATEGORY A, ABSTAIN ON CATEGORY B AND VOTE AGAINST CATEGORY C (ASSUMING OF COURSE THAT THEY DO NOT DECIDE TO DROP OUT AFTER THE INFORMAL SCOUNDINGS). I HAVE CONSIDERED RECOMMENDING THAT IN THE FIRST ROUND I SHOULD VOTE IN FAVOUR OF BOTH CATEGORY A AND CATEGORY B. THERE ARE TWO ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THIS COURSE: FIRST, IT WOULD ENABLE US TO RETAIN FULL TACTICAL FLEXIBILITY UNTIL WE HAD BEEN ABLE TO TAKE A FIRST READING OF THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF THE CANDIDATES AND IN PARTICULAR WHETHER ANY OF THEM WAS BEING VETOED; SECONDLY, IT WOULD ENABLE US TO SAY AFTERWARDS TO ANY CANDIDATES FROM WHOM IT MIGHT BE EMBARRASSING TO HAVE WITHHELD SUPPORT (EG ORTIZ DE ROSAS, RAMPHAL) THAT WE HAD VOTED FOR THEM AT THE BEGINNING AND HAD ONLY SWITCHED TO AN ABSTENTION WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THEY WERE NOT GOING TO WIN. BUT IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE DANGER OF THIS COURSE IS THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT WITH ANY ACCURACY HOW MANY VOTES THE VARIOUS CANDIDATES WILL GET ON THE FIRST ROUND AND THAT WE MIGHT BE INSTRUMENTAL IN LETTING IN ONE OF OUR CATEGORY B CANDIDATES ON THE FIRST ROUND. I THEREFORE RECOMMEND AS ABOVE. TO PUT IT PLAINLY, WE WOULD KICK OURSELVES IF WE PROVIDED THE NINTH VOTE (WITH NO VETO) FOR RAMPHAL ON THE FIRST ROUND WITH SADRUDDIN AND/OR PEREZ DE CUELLAR GETTING EIGHT VOTES AND NO VETO, THUS HAVING AN EXCELLENT CHANCE AFTER ANOTHER ROUND OR TWO.

9. ASSUMING THAT THE FIRST ROUND DOES NOT PRODUCE A CLEAR RESULT, I HOPE THAT THERE WILL BE TIME TO CONSULT YOU BEFORE WE PROCEED TO SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT ROUNDS. BUT IF NOT, I RECOMMEND THAT I BE INSTRUCTED TO WORK FOR A RESULT IN WHICH ONE OF OUR CATEGORY A OR CATEGORY B CANDIDATES IS RECOMMENDED TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR APPOINTMENT, IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER OF PREFERENCE: SADRUDDIN, PEREZ DE CUELLAR, ORTIZ DE ROSAS, RAMPHAL, SALAS. THIS WILL MEAN GIVING ME TACTICAL DISCRETION TO SWITCH FROM VOTES IN FAVOUR TO ABSTENTIONS ON VARIOUS OF THE CANDIDATES AS THE RACE DEVELOPS.

10. MY FRENCH COLLEAGUE (PLEASE PROTECT) HAS TOLD ME THAT THEIR PREFERRED CANDIDATES ARE SADRUDDIN AND PEREZ DE CUELLAR IN THAT ORDER. HE THINKS THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN PARIS WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO VOTE FOR ORTIZ DE ROSAS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS REASONS. HE HAS NOT VOUCHSAFED ANY VIEWS ABOUT RAMPHAL. MRS KIRKPATRICK ALSO PUTS SADRUDDIN AT THE TOP OF HER LIST BUT WOULD PUT ORTIZ DE ROSAS AHEAD OF PEREZ DE CUELLAR.

11. FCO AND UKDEL NATO: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE THIS TELEGRAM ONLY TO PRIVATE SECRETARY, PS/MR HURD, PS/PUS, SIR A ACLAND, GOODISON AND WILLIAMS, UND.

PARSONS

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12. MY FRENCH COLLEAGUE (PLEASE PROTECT) HAS TOLD ME THAT THEIR PREFERRED CANDIDATES ARE SADRUDDIN AND PEREZ DE CUELLAR IN THAT ORDER. HE THINKS THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN PARIS WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO VOTE FOR ORTIZ DE ROSAS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS REASONS. HE HAS NOT VOUCHSAFED ANY VIEWS ABOUT RAMPHAL. MRS KIRKPATRICK ALSO PUTS SADRUDDIN AT THE TOP OF HER LIST BUT WOULD PUT ORTIZ DE ROSAS AHEAD OF PEREZ DE CUELLAR.

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PARSONS

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Private Secretary

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ELECTION OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

1. The informal soundings on possible third candidacies have just been completed in the Security Council with the following results:

	Members 'encouraging' candidate	Permanent Members 'discouraging'
Sadruddin	9 (UK)	1 (USSR)
Perez de Cuellar	8 (UK)	0
Ortiz	7	2 (F, USSR)
Ramphal	4	3 (F, US, USSR)
Salas	3	4
Illueca	6	4
Ramphal	0	4
Arosemena	2	4
Quijano	0	4

} all but China

2. The President is now consulting each candidate and hopes to proceed with the formal voting in half an hour or so.

N C R Williams

N C R Williams
United Nations Department
5.40 pm

cc: PS/Mr Hurd
PS/PUS
Sir A Acland
Mr Goodison