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INFO SAVING BONN, PARIS, WASHINGTON, UKREP BRUSSELS, UKDEL NATO,
(CONSULAR POSTS IN ITALY, HOLY SEE - ACTIONED ROME).

VISIT OF THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES TO ITALY

1. THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES CONCLUDED THEIR HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL 17 DAY TOUR OF ITALY IN VENICE ON 5 MAY. THE DEMANDS IMPOSED BY A TOUR INVOLVING VISITS TO 9 CITIES SPREAD AROUND THE ENTIRE ITALIAN PENINSULA WERE FORMIDABLE, BOTH ON THE ROYAL COUPLE AND ON THE LIMITED LOGISTICAL RESOURCES OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. BUT THE DETERMINATION OF THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS AND THEIR ITALIAN HOSTS TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE VISIT OVERCAME OCCASIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE SHORTCOMINGS.
2. THE RECEPTION GIVEN BY THE ITALIAN PEOPLE TO THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS WAS ALWAYS WARM AND AT TIMES ECSTATIC FROM THE MOMENT THEY ARRIVED AT OLBIA AIRPORT ON 19 APRIL. WHILE VISITS TO THE MAJOR CITIES OF MAINLAND ITALY BY FOREIGN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AND HEADS OF STATE ARE COMMONPLACE, A LONG PUBLIC TOUR OF THIS KIND IS NOT USUAL AND IT SUCCEEDED IN CAPTURING THE IMAGINATION OF ITALIANS FROM ALL CLASSES AND BACKGROUNDS. THIS REACTION WAS REFLECTED BY THE ITALIAN PRESS. WHILE BRITISH PRESS CONCENTRATED ON THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE CHANGE OF PLANS FOR THE VISIT TO THE VATICAN, AND ON WHAT SEEMED TO ME VERY UNFAIR CRITICISM OF THE PRINCESS' WARDROBE, THE ITALIAN PRESS WAS ALMOST UNIVERSALLY SYMPATHETIC. PERHAPS INEVITABLY THE PRINCESS WAS AT TIMES PORTRAYED IN LANGUAGE REMINISCENT OF FAIRYTALE ROMANCES, BUT THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS RECEIVED WARM TRIBUTES BOTH FOR THE PROFESSIONAL WAY IN WHICH THEY CARRIED OUT THEIR OFFICIAL DUTIES, AND FOR THE HUMAN QUALITIES WHICH THEY SHOWED ON WALKABOUTS AMONGST THE CROWDS OF WELL WISHERS WHO TURNED UP TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF THEM WHEREVER THEY WENT. THE SPECTACULAR SETTING OF MANY OF THE ENGAGEMENTS, AND THE BRIGHT SUNSHINE WHICH HELD OUT FOR MOST OF THE VISIT, GAVE THE PRESS AND TV PHOTOGRAPHERS A FIELD DAY. ITALIAN TELEVISION ALSO GAVE VERY WIDE COVERAGE TO THE VISIT WITH SEVERAL MINUTES OF PROMINENT FILM AND COMMENTRY DURING THE NATIONAL NEWS BULLETINS EACH EVENING.
3. THE PROGRAMME FOR THE TOUR WAS VARIED AND COMPREHENSIVE. APART FROM THE DAY AT THE VATICAN, ENGAGEMENTS INCLUDED MEETINGS WITH THE PRESIDENT, THE PRIME MINISTER, THE FOREIGN MINISTER, PRESIDENTS OF BOTH CHAMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, AND THE AUTHORITIES IN EACH TOWN AND REGION WHICH THEY VISITED. THREE SENIOR ITALIAN MINISTERS (ALL FROM THE VENETO AREA) ATTENDED THE FINAL DINNER ON BRITANNIA ON 5 MAY. THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS SAW A NUMBER OF ITALY'S FINEST CULTURAL MONUMENTS, ATTENDED A MOVING

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audience

REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY AT ANZIO WAR CEMETERY, VISITED PROMINENT
BRITISH INSTITUTIONS IN ITALY, AND ALSO PAID A VERY USEFUL
COMMERCIAL VISIT TO THE AGUSTA HELICOPTER FACTORY NEAR MILAN
WHERE THE JOINT ANGLO/ITALIAN EH101 HELICOPTER IS TO BE BUILT.
AT THE SAME TIME THEY WERE ABLE TO HAVE INFORMAL MEETINGS WITH A
SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF ITALIANS, SOME OF THEIR OWN GENERATION, IN
THE COURSE OF THE MORE PRIVATE PARTS OF THE VISIT, SUCH AS THEIR
3 DAY STAY IN FLORENCE WITH SIR HAROLD ACTON, WHICH THEY GREATLY
ENJOYED.

4. THE BENEFIT WHICH THE VISIT IS LIKELY TO GIVE TO ANGLO-
ITALIAN RELATIONS IN THE WIDER SENSE AND TO OUR PARTICULAR
EFFORT IN ITALY IS VERY GREAT. THE DEPTH OF ADMIRATION AND GOOD-
WILL FELT BY ORDINARY ITALIAN PEOPLE TOWARDS BRITAIN WAS EVERY-
WHERE APPARENT. THE ENTHUSIASM WAS ESPECIALLY WARM IN SARDINIA,
SICILY AND PUGLIA, POSSIBLY BECAUSE THESE ARE USUALLY NEGLECTED
BY FOREIGN DIGNITARIES VISITING ITALY. THE PRESENCE OF HM YACHT
WAS INVALUABLE, BOTH BECAUSE IT IS ITSELF SO IMPRESSIVE AND
BECAUSE IT COULD BE USED FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT OF LARGE
NUMBERS OF LOCAL PEOPLE AT BARI AND VENICE. BRITANNIA WAS ALSO
USED DURING THE VISIT, WHEN TRH WERE IN FLORENCE, AS THE VENUE
FOR A VERY SUCCESSFUL MEETING IN THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED SERIES
OF ANGLO-ITALIAN ECONOMIC TALKS, AT WHICH MR PATTIE FROM THE DTI
ACTED AS HOST.

5. ALTOGETHER, THE VISIT HAS WON MANY FRIENDS FOR BRITAIN
AND ADMIRERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY AS ACCOMPLISHED AMBASSADORS
FOR THEIR PEOPLE. IT HAS ALSO CONFIRMED MANY EXISTING FRIEND-
SHIPS. THE BENEFIT TO OUR POLITICAL RELATIONS SHOULD
NOT BE UNDER-ESTIMATED AS THIS WAS AN EVENT WHICH WILL
BE REMEMBERED FOR A LONG TIME.

6. DESPATCH FOLLOWS.

7. FCO PSE PASS SAVING ADDRESSEES.

BRIDGES

(PALACE)
Fco/WH

WED