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IMMEDIATE

LISFO 003/05

OO FCO

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FM LISBON 051130Z DEC 80

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 235 OF 5 DECEMBER 1980

AND SAVING TO MOD, UKREP BRUSSELS, BRUSSELS, THE HAGUE,
DUBLIN, BONN, PARIS, ROME, LUXEMBOURG, COPENHAGEN, UKDEL NATO,
MADRID AND WASHINGTON.

IM. SED (FCO/WH),

Hd. Pcd

Ps

Is/LPs

Ps/Plus

Sir E. Youde

Mr. Bullard

Mr. Ferguson,

DI Cabinet Office,

Ps/No. 10, Downing St

R.C. (11x).

DEATH OF THE PRIME MINISTER.

1. AS I TOLD THE RESIDENT CLERK ON THE TELEPHONE IMMEDIATELY
AFTERWARDS, THE PRIME MINISTER, DR FRANCISCO SA CARNEIRO,
WAS KILLED LAST NIGHT IN A LIGHT TWIN-ENGINEED AIRCRAFT WHICH CRASHED
INTO A BUILDING ONE MINUTE AFTER TAKING OFF FROM LISBON FOR OPORTO.
THE OTHER OCCUPANTS OF THE PLANE, THE PRIME MINISTER'S LADY,
SNU ABECASSIS, THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE ENGINEER ADELINO
AMARO DA COSTA AND HIS WIFE, THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRIVATE SECRETARY
ANTONIO PATRICIO GOUVEIA, ALL OF THEM OUR FRIENDS, AND THE
TWO PILOTS, WERE KILLED. THE INFORMATION GIVEN BY THE TELEVISION
LAST NIGHT THAT GOUVEIA'S WIFE WAS ON THE PLANE IS APPARENTLY
INCORRECT. THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT IS AS YET UNKNOWN. THERE IS
NO EVIDENCE OF SABOTAGE AND I DOUBT IF ANY WILL BE FORTHCOMING
BUT IT IS UNIVERSALLY SUSPECTED BY THE PORTUGUESE AND THE VICE
PRIME MINISTER SAID ON TELEVISION LAST NIGHT THAT THERE
WOULD BE A RIGOROUS ENQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES OF THE CRASH. THE
BODIES ARE BURNT BEYOND RECOGNITION. SA CARNEIRO LEAVES A
WIDOW, FROM WHOM HE HAS BEEN SEPARATED FOR SOME YEARS AND SEVERAL
CHILDREN, INCLUDING A DAUGHTER AT SCHOOL IN ENGLAND.

2. I RECOMMENDED TO THE RESIDENT CLERK THAT YOU, THE PRIME
MINISTER AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE IF HE WISHED
SHOULD SEND MESSAGES TO PROF FREITAS DO AMARAL AS VICE PRIME
MINISTER. WE HAVE NOW RECEIVED THE MESSAGES FROM YOURSELF AND
THE PRIME MINISTER AND HAVE SNT THEM ON. I HAVE MYSELF WRITTEN
TO HIM, TO FRANCISCO PINTO BALSEMAO (SA CARNEIRO'S CLOSE FRIEND
AND POLITICAL COLLEAGUE) AND TO GOUVEIA'S FATHER AND WIDOW.

Read in full, ml

AND POLITICAL COLLEAGUE) AND TO GOUVEIA'S FATHER AND WIDOW.

3. THE LOSS OF HER OUTSTANDING POLITICAL LEADER IS A TRAGEDY FOR PORTUGAL. THIS IS A COUNTRY WHICH TENDS TO DRIFT AND FALL INTO CONFUSION WITHOUT FIRM LEADERSHIP AND SA CARNEIRO WAS THE ONE MAN WHO HAD THE DRIVE, DETERMINATION AND POLITICAL GENIUS TO PUSH THROUGH THE BIG CHANGES NEEDED IN PORTUGAL IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS. THERE IS NO-ONE IN SIGHT AT PRESENT WHO CAN REPLACE HIM. AMARO DA COSTA WAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE POLITICIAN IN THE CENTRE DEMOCRAT PARTY.

4. IN THE SHORT TERM AND I THINK UNTIL AFTER THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION FREITAS DO AMARAL AS VICE PRIME MINISTER AND NO 2 TO SA CARNEIRO IN THE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE WILL BE IN CHARGE OF THE GOVERNMENT. BUT IN DUE COURSE THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AS THE LARGER PARTY WILL, I THINK, INSIST ON PROVIDING THE NEXT PRIME MINISTER. BALSEMAO WOULD, IN MY JUDGEMENT BE A LIKELY CHOICE THOUGH MOTA AMARAL OR MOTA PINTO (EITHER OF WHOM WOULD BE GOOD) MIGHT BE PREFERRED.

5. THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION IS TO DECIDE TODAY WHETHER THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ON SUNDAY WILL GO FORWARD AS PLANNED. IF IT DOES THE DEATH OF SA CARNEIRO MAY AND I THINK PROBABLY WILL PRODUCE A REACTION WHICH WOULD HELP HIS CANDIDATE, SOARES CARNEIRO. AS AGAINST THIS, THE SHOCK MIGHT CAUSE VOTERS TO CLING TO THE MAN THEY KNOW AND VOTE FOR EANES. THE APPARENTLY WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT THE AIRCRAFT MAY HAVE BEEN TAMPERED WITH BY, SAY, A LEFT-WING EXTREMIST OR BY THE COMMUNISTS, WILL BE LIKELY TO DAMAGE EANES'S CHANCES ESPECIALLY IF THE FIRST ROUND IS HELD AS PLANNED ON SUNDAY, SINCE IT IS HE THAT THE COMMUNISTS ARE SUPPORTING. THE COMMUNISTS HAVE NOW INEPTLY CALLED FOR THE RESIGNATION OF THE GOVERNMENT ON THE GROUNDS THAT THERE IS NO PRIME MINISTER. IN A DIGNIFIED TELEVISION SPEECH AT MIDNIGHT, FREITAS DO AMARAL TWICE CALLED FOR CALM AND SERENITY - FOR THE AUTHORITIES FEAR THAT FRUSTRATION AMONG SUPPORTERS OF SA CARNEIRO MIGHT TAKE A VIOLENT FORM - AND DECLARED THAT SA CARNEIRO'S POLICIES WOULD BE CARRIED ON. IN THE MEANTIME THE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN SUSPENDED AND A LARGE OUTDOOR MEETING IN LISBON TO HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED BY EANES WAS CANCELLED.

6. IT HAS NOW BEEN ANNOUNCED THAT THERE WILL BE AN OFFICIAL REQUIEM MASS TOMORROW MORNING (SATURDAY) FOLLOWED BY PRIVATE FUNERALS. THE PORTUGUESE HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY WILL WELCOME GUESTS FROM OVERSEAS FOR THE MASS BUT WILL NOT SPECIFICALLY INVITE THEM. MY NETHERLANDS, BELGIAN, FRENCH AND GERMAN COLLEAGUES ARE ALL RECOMMENDING THAT IF POSSIBLE A MINISTER SHOULD COME TO

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FCO PLEASE PASS [✓] SAVINGS ADDRESSEES.

MORAN

[Passes Savings, as requested]

NNNN



SENT/RECD AT 05/1242Z PJF/~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ITF