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TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1172 OF 29 APRIL

INFO BONN, ROME, PARIS, UKREP BRUSSELS.

WILLIAMSBURG SUMMIT: PRESS HANDLING

RC
(FP)

1. RENTSCHLER, THE US AMBASSADOR TO MALTA, HAS BEEN RECALLED FOR ATTACHMENT TO THE WHITE HOUSE IN ORDER TO HANDLE PUBLIC RELATIONS UNTIL AFTER THE WILLIAMSBURG SUMMIT. HE IS CO-ORDINATING THE PUBLIC LINE FOR ALL THE AGENCIES INVOLVED, AND IS A MEMBER OF THE SUMMIT DIRECTING COMMITTEE CHAIRED BY JUDGE CLARK AND DEEVER.

2. RENTSCHLER HAS TOLD THE COMMERCIAL MINISTER THAT THE AMERICANS ARE ONLY NOW DEVELOPING THEIR BASIC PUBLIC THEMES FOR THE SUMMIT. THE CENTRAL MESSAGE TO GET ACROSS IS THAT THIS IS THE "RECOVERY SUMMIT", AND (AT LEAST FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION) THAT THIS IS AT LEAST IN PART DUE TO THE PRESIDENT'S ECONOMIC POLICIES, THOUGH THE AMERICANS ARE ANXIOUS NOT TO PROJECT THE IMAGE OF AN ECONOMIC SUPER POWER URGING ITS ALLIES TO FOLLOW EXACTLY IN ITS ECONOMIC TRACKS. THE AMERICANS WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE THINGS THAT UNITE THE SEVEN FAR OUTWEIGH THOSE THAT DIVIDE THEM. IN PARTICULAR THEY SEE NO REASON FOR TROUBLE ON EAST-WEST TRADE MATTERS (ROBINSON, NSC, FORMERLY AN ENTHUSIAST FOR THE PIPELINE SANCTIONS, TELLS US THAT THE WHITE HOUSE IS SATISFIED WITH THE WAY THE STUDIES ARE GOING, WHICH IS A GOOD SIGN AS FAR AS IT GOES).

3. RENTSCHLER WAS VAGUE ON HOW THE AMERICANS PROPOSED TO HANDLE THE ECONOMIC ISSUES (TRADE, EXCHANGE RATES AND INTEREST RATES), THOUGH HE FELT THAT THINKING IN THE WHITE HOUSE ON NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS ESPECIALLY DEBT WAS NOW MOVING CLOSER TO THAT OF THE EUROPEANS. HE FEARED HOWEVER THAT THE PRESS WERE BAFFLED BY THE ABSENCE OF DETAILED ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR THIS SUMMIT BY THE SHERPAS, AND THAT THERE WAS A RISK OF THEM PERCEIVING A CERTAIN VOID AT THE CENTRE OF THE AMERICAN APPROACH IN CONSEQUENCE.

4. RENTSCHLER (ACCOMPANIED BY SCHELLENBERGER, USIA, AND SLOANE,

~~SHERPAS, AND THAT THERE WAS A RISK OF THEM PERCEIVING A CERTAIN VOID AT THE CENTRE OF THE AMERICAN APPROACH IN CONSEQUENCE.~~

4. RENTSCHLER (ACCOMPANIED BY SCHELLENBERGER, USIA, AND SLOANE, STATE DEPARTMENT) IS SHORTLY PLANNING TO VISIT EUROPE TO DISCUSS WITH US EMBASSIES THERE HOW BEST TO HANDLE THE PUBLIC RELATIONS ISSUES IN THE EYES OF EUROPEAN OPINION. HE WILL BE IN LONDON ON 9 MAY, AND THEREAFTER IN PARIS, BRUSSELS, BONN AND ROME. THOUGH HIS MAIN BUSINESS IS WITH THE US EMBASSY IN LONDON (WHERE STREATOR IS LOOKING AFTER HIM) HE WELCOMED THE SUGGESTION THAT HE MIGHT TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY OF A WORD WITH BERNARD INGHAM AND JOHN GOULDEN, IN ORDER TO GET A FEEL FOR THE WAY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT (AS WELL AS BRITISH OPINION) VIEW THE ECONOMIC AND EAST-WEST ISSUES LIKELY TO ARISE AT WILLIAMSBURG.

5. WE AGREED TO PASS THE IDEA ON TO LONDON, WHILE SUGGESTING THAT ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANY MEETINGS SHOULD BE MADE THROUGH STREATOR.

6. RENTSCHLER'S VISIT WILL BE A USEFUL OPPORTUNITY TO GET ACROSS TO THE WHITE HOUSE OUR CONCERNS ON MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE AS WELL AS ON PUBLIC RELATIONS. WE THEREFORE HOPE THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO SEE HIM. HE IS WELL-DISPOSED AND WAS HELPFUL TO US ON THE FALKLANDS AND ON MANY OTHER OCCASIONS WHEN HE WAS IN THE NSC BEFORE GOING TO MALTA LAST AUTUMN (HE IS A CAREER FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER).

ADVANCE COPIES TO: INGHAM NO 10, PS/SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG, EVANS, GOULDEN, FCO. LITTLER, TREASURY.

WRIGHT

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