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CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 162205Z NOV 84

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 3420 OF 16 NOVEMBER

FOLLOWING PERSONAL FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY AND FOR POWELL (NO 10)  
VYOUR TELECONS WITH HANNAY AND KERR: VISIT(S) TO WASHINGTON

1. GATHER THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL BE SEEING AMBASSADOR PRICE AT CHEQUERS ON SUNDAY. SHE MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW IN ADVANCE HOW SHE SEE THE PRESENT STATE OF PLAY ON THE PROPOSED DECEMBER AND FEBRUARY VISITS.

2. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS ACCEPTED THE IDEA OF THE SHORT VISIT ON 22 DECEMBER, AND ENVISAGES A THREE-HOUR INFORMAL GET-TOGETHER AT CAMP DAVID. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT HE IS BEING ADVISED BY HIS STAFF THAT IT CAN BE REGARDED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE PROPOSED FEBRUARY VISIT. IT IS NOT HOWEVER CLEAR TO ME THAT HE HIMSELF SEES THEM AS ALTERNATIVES, AND WOULD NOT BE DELIGHTED TO SEE THE PRIME MINISTER TWICE THIS WINTER.

3. NSC CONTACTS TELL US THAT AMBASSADOR PRICE WILL BE INSTRUCTED TO SAY THAT THE DECEMBER PLAN HAS FOUND FAVOUR: AND TO SEEK TO PERSUADE THE PRIME MINISTER THAT THE FEBRUARY PLAN SHOULD THEREFORE BE DROPPED. HE HAS BEEN ASKED TO STRESS THAT THE EXCEPTIONAL DECEMBER ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE SEEN AS EVIDENCE OF THE CLOSENESS OF THE RELATIONSHIP: WHEREAS THE FEBRUARY PLAN WOULD BE SEEN AS MORE OF A ROUTINE EVENT. THERE IS SOMETHING IN THIS: BUT OF COURSE WE ENVISAGED THAT THE PROGRAMME IN FEBRUARY WOULD GO WELL BEYOND THE WHITE HOUSE - IN THE ADMINISTRATION, ON THE HILL, AND IN TEXAS AND CALIFORNIA AND MOST OF THIS WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE IN DECEMBER.

4. IF IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT WE ARE INDEED CONFRONTED BY A CHOICE, I AM SURE THAT WE SHOULD DROP DECEMBER AND CONCENTRATE ON FEBRUARY, AS IS I UNDERSTAND THE PRIME MINISTER'S OWN THINKING. BUT I AM NOT SURE THAT WE HAVE YET REACHED THAT POINT.

5. I OF COURSE RECOGNISE THAT A DECEMBER VISIT WOULD COME AT THE END OF AN EXHAUSTING TOUR: AND IT IS ASKING A LOT OF THE PRIME MINISTER TO CONTEMPLATE COMING HERE THEN, AS WELL AS IN FEBRUARY. IF FOR OUR OWN REASONS WE WANT TO DROP THE DECEMBER PLAN WE SHOULD OF COURSE DO SO FORTHWITH.

6. BUT IT WOULD I BELIEVE BE PREMATURE TO DROP DECEMBER ON THE GROUNDS THAT WE CANNOT HAVE BOTH VISITS, OR THAT IT WOULD BE UNWELCOME TO THE PRESIDENT THAT BOTH SHOULD TAKE PLACE. NEITHER POINT IS YET CLEAR.

7. AS AGREED, I SHALL DO NO FURTHER DELVING HERE UNTIL I HEAR FURTHER FROM YOU, IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHEQUERS CONVERSATIONS ON SUNDAY. BUT I WOULD SUGGEST THAT IN THESE CONVERSATIONS IT SHOULD BE MADE PLAIN TO AMBASSADOR PRICE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S IDEAS FOR FEBRUARY WERE FOR A TOUR GOING WELL BEYOND WASHINGTON. (INCIDENTALLY, GEORGE BUSH TOLD ME TODAY HOW WARMLY HE WELCOMED THE IDEA THAT THE PRIME MINISTER MIGHT THEN VISIT TEXAS.) PRICE'S REPORT BACK SHOULD THEN HELP TO ESTABLISH WHETHER THE IDEA OF OFFERING US ONLY ONE VISIT (AND IN DECEMBER) IS THE PRESIDENTS' OR, AS I SUSPECT, ONLY THAT OF THE WATCHDOGS AT HIS DOOR.

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