

PS
 PS/LADY YOUNG
 PS/PUS
 MR BRAITHWAITE
 MR ~~W~~ O'NEILL
 MR AUST, Legal Advisers
 MR FREELAND, Legal Advisers
 ED/MAED (2)
 ED/NAD



PS/S of S
 MR LAZARUS, PUS
 MR KNIGHTON
 MR ~~ROBERTS~~ } DEPT OF TRANSPORT

MR ROBERTS
 MR ~~W~~ } DEPT
 MR ~~W~~
 MR BECKETT (Solicitors)

RESIDENT CLERK

IMMEDIATE

POWELL
 MR ~~W~~ 10 DOWNING ST
 MR GARDINER, ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY 170900Z

FM WASHINGTON 170630Z NOV 84
 TO IMMEDIATE FCO
 TELEGRAM NO 3433 OF 17 NOV

LAKER: CONSULTATIONS.

1. THIS HAS BEEN A PROFESSIONALLY FRUSTRATING AND EMOTIONALLY DRAINING DAY. MY STAFF AND I HAVE BEEN TRYING ALL DAY TO GET AT THE TRUTH BEHIND THE ONLY TWO FACTS KNOWN TO US: FIRST THAT WALLIS WAS CARRYING A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECONDLY THAT NEXT WEEK'S TALKS WERE OFF, BECAUSE NO AMERICAN OFFICIALS WOULD BE LONDON TO CONDUCT THEM. FEW OFFICIALS WERE PRIVY TO THE DECISION AND ALL OFFICIALS IN ALL AGENCIES SEEMED TO HAVE TAKEN A VOW OF SILENCE. WHEN I CALLED ON THE VICE-PRESIDENT THIS MORNING AND MENTIONED LAKER TO HIM, ALL HE DID WAS TO INSTRUCT HIS STAFF TO RECORD THAT THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR HAD RAISED THE SUBJECT OF LAKER, AT WHICH THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S HAIR HAD STOOD ON END. THESE CONTACTS HAD LED US TO THE PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION THAT THE MESSAGE MUST CONTAIN BAD NEWS IN RELATION TO THE INDICTMENTS, OUR REASONING WAS THAT HAD IT BEEN OTHERWISE, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO NEED FOR A SPECIAL EMISSARY AS TO THE CHOICE OF MESSENGER, WALLIS IS KNOWN TO HAVE SPECIAL SHOCK-ABSORBENT QUALITIES AND WE HAD INTENDED TO ASSUME THAT HE WOULD NEED THEM AT CHEQUERS.

2. I DELAYED SENDING YOU A BAD NEWS TELEGRAM SINCE I KNOW I SHOULD BE SEEING SHULTZ AT DINNER TONIGHT AND HOPED TO GET A SIGN FROM HIM OF THE TRUE STATE OF PLAY. HE GREETED ME ON THE RECEIVING LINE WITH A WARM SMILE AND WHEN I SUGGESTED THAT WE MIGHT ALL AS WELL EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY TONIGHT SINCE WE WERE IN FOR A BAD WEEK-END, HE ASKED ME WHAT ON EARTH I MEANT. WHEN I ANSWERED: "LAKER", HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN A TOUGH DISCUSSION IN CABINET THAT MORNING, THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD TAKEN A FIRM DECISION, THAT IT WAS A COURAGEOUS ONE AND THAT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO US. AT THIS POINT, I HAD TO MOVE ON. AT THE END OF DINNER HE HAD MOVED SMARTLY AWAY BEFORE I COULD CROSS-EXAMINE HIM.

*Sent 10/11/84
 By
 Mr Fox
 to
 Creagers*

IT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO US. AT THIS POINT, I HAD TO MOVE ON. AT THE END OF DINNER HE HAD MOVED SMARTLY AWAY BEFORE I COULD CROSS-EXAMINE HIM.

3. AS YOU KNOW, MY SWEET AND GULLIBLE NATURE PRE-DISPOSES ME TO THINK THE BEST OF PEOPLE AND THEIR MOTIVES AND YOU ARE ALWAYS KIND ENOUGH TO MAKE ALLOWANCES FOR THAT FAILING. THE EVENTS OF TODAY CAN BE INTERPRETED AS SIGNIFYING THAT WALLIS BRINGS BAD NEWS, BUT WITH CRUMBS OF COMFORT. ON THE OTHER HAND, I HAVE TO TRUST SHULTZ AND THE STRANGE BEHAVIOUR OF THE VICE PRESIDENT CAN BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT WALLIS BRINGS GOOD NEWS, THOUGH WITH PERHAPS A BIT OF DOWNSIDE. THE DISRUPTION OF THE TALKS CAN BE INTERPRETED EITHER WAY; FOR IF THE NEWS IS GOOD, BOTH SIDES WILL NEED A PAUSE FOR REFLECTION.

4. ON THE WHOLE, I BELIEVE THAT WALLIS WILL BE THE BEARER OF GOOD NEWS, OR AT LEAST, GOOD ENOUGH NEWS. IF SO, GIVEN THE TRAVAIL OF THE PAST MONTHS, A MESSAGE OF APPRECIATION FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE PRESIDENT WILL BE IN ORDER, THE WARMTH OF WHICH WILL BE DEPENDENT UPON THE GOODNESS OF THE NEWS. THE VALUE TO US OF THE RIGHT DECISION, IF THAT IS WHAT IT IS, IS ALSO A MEASURE OF THE COURAGE OF THE PRESIDENT IN BEING READY TO ACCEPT DOMESTIC CRITICISM.

WRIGHT

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