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FM WASHINGTON 122007Z JULY 1979

TO ROUTINE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1910 OF 12 JULY 1979.

MY TELNO 1831: U S POLITICAL SCENE

1. PRESIDENT CARTER IS STILL AT CAMP DAVID, TO WHICH OVER 100 OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL ADVISERS HAVE BEEN SUMMONED DURING THE PAST WEEK, INCLUDING STATE GOVERNORS, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, ECONOMISTS, BUSINESSMEN, CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS AND, LAST TUESDAY, A MULTI-DENOMINATIONAL GROUP OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS. (HE HAS ALSO SEEN BISHOP MUZOREWA).

2. LITTLE HARD INFORMATION HAS EMERGED AND CARTER SEEMS, TYPICALLY, TO HAVE GIVEN HIS INTERLOCUTORS FEW INDICATIONS OF HOW HIS MIND IS WORKING. BUT BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS OF ENERGY, INFLATION AND IMPENDING RECESSION HE IS EVIDENT PRE-OCCUPIED WITH DEEPER QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE GOVERNABILITY OF THE UNITED STATES.

3. THE DOMESTIC SUMMIT IS NOW WINDING DOWN AND IT IS THOUGHT THAT CARTER MAY ADDRESS THE NATION ON SUNDAY. THERE HAS BEEN TALK OF STAFF REORGANISATION AND OF DROPPING SCHLESINGER, AND O'LEARY (NO. 2 IN THE ENERGY DEPARTMENT) HAS ANNOUNCED HIS RESIGNATION. WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMEN ARE WARNING AGAINST EXAGGERATED EXPECTATIONS OF WHAT CARTER WILL HAVE TO SAY. BUT HE HAS HIMSELF RAISED THE STAKES BY HIS RETREAT TO CAMP DAVID. LAST WEEKEND A GROUP OF 20 DEMOCRATIC STATE GOVERNORS VOTED TO ENDORSE CARTER FOR RE-NOMINATION. BUT HIS APPROVAL RATINGS IN THE POLLS ARE NOW LOWER THAN NIXON AT HIS LOWEST AND THIS IS PROBABLY HIS LAST CHANCE TO RE-ESTABLISH HIS POLITICAL CREDIBILITY.

ROBINSON.

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*Prime Minister*  

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