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TELEGRAM NUMBER 2550 OF 18 JULY

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*Useful summary.
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THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION, DETROIT 14-17 JULY

1. THE REPUBLICAN PARTY HAS COME AWAY FROM DETROIT WITH ITS MORALE HIGH, OPTIMISTIC THAT REAGAN CAN WIN IN NOVEMBER, AND DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN THE OUTWARD AND VISIBLE SHOW OF PARTY UNITY WHICH WAS A PRINCIPAL THEME OF THE CONVENTION.
2. MOST OF THE PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS STRUCK A NOTE OF SOMBRE EVANGELISM. AMERICA WAS SAID TO BE FACING THE GREATEST THREAT IN ALL ITS HISTORY TO ITS VERY EXISTENCE AS A FREE NATION AS A CONSEQUENCE OF CARTER'S MISMANAGEMENT OF DEFENCE, FOREIGN POLICY AND ECONOMY. REPUBLICANS WERE CALLED ON TO UNITE IN A CRUSADE (REAGAN'S PHRASE) TO SAVE AMERICA AND MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN THROUGH A COMBINATION OF STRONGER DEFENCE AND A MORE ASSERTIVE FOREIGN POLICY, COUPLED WITH A PRESCRIPTION OF GROWTH, OPPORTUNITY AND PROGRESS AT HOME. THE REPUBLICAN PROGRAMME IS ESSENTIALLY A MIXTURE OF PATRIOTISM AND POLULISM.
3. REAGAN'S OVERWHELMING ENDORSEMENT AS PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE WAS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION. IN HIS ACCEPTANCE SPEECH ON 17 JULY REAGAN MADE A BROAD-BASED APPEAL TO VOTERS OF ALL PARTIES, QUOTING FROM ROOSEVELT'S NEW DEAL SPEECH OF 1932 (TO THE DISCOMFORT OF SOME OF THE RIGHT WING FUNDAMENTALISTS IN HIS AUDIENCE) AND UNDERTAKING TO CARRY OUT QUOTE THE UNKEPT PROMISES UNQUOTE OF DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATIONS AND A CONGRESS CONTROLLED BY THE DEMOCRATS FOR 25 YEARS. MANY OF THE THEMES WERE FAMILIAR: A 10 PERCENT TAX CUT IN 1981; IMPROVEMENTS IN BUSINESS DEPRECIATION TAXES; A FREEZE ON FEDERAL HIRING, STATE RATHER THAN FEDERAL CONTROL OF PROGRAMMES; STRONGER DEFENCE. BUT THE SPEECH ALSO INCLUDED AN APPEAL FOR SUPPORT FROM MINORITY GROUPS (TRADITIONALLY DEMOCRATIC VOTERS AND ALL BUT UNREPRESENTED AMONG THE DELEGATES); A PROMISE TO UPHOLD THE INTEGRITY OF ALL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND A NOD IN THE DIRECTION OF ENERGY CONSERVATION - THE FIRST TIME REAGAN HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THE NEED FOR RESTRAINT.
4. REAGAN ALSO PROMISED CLOSE MONITORING OF STATE PRACTICES, AND LEGISLATION WHERE NECESSARY, TO ROOT OUT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN - AN ATTEMPT TO PATCH UP THE DISPUTE IN THE PARTY OVER ITS ABANDONMENT AFTER 40 YEARS OF SUPPORT FOR AN EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION. THE DISPUTE - AND THE PARTY'S SUPPORT FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO BAN ABORTION - PROVIDED THE ONLY REAL CONTROVERSIES OF THE CONVENTION AND COULD GIVE THE PARTY SOME TROUBLE IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN: ERA IS AN EMOTIVE NATIONAL ISSUE AND A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT IS SUPPORTED BY A MAJORITY OF WOMEN VOTERS.

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5. THE ONLY DRAMA WAS PROVIDED BY THE ATTEMPT TO NEGOTIATE FORD'S NOMINATION AS VICE PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING MATE. THE INITIATIVE CAME FROM SENIOR REPUBLICANS SEEKING A QUOTE DREAM TICKET UNQUOTE AND WAS ENCOURAGED BY REAGAN. NEGOTIATIONS BROKE DOWN ON THE EXTENSIVE POWERS, INCLUDING CONTROL OF KEY APPOINTMENTS AND THE RUNNING OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, WHICH FORD (OR AT ANY RATE HIS REPRESENTATIVES, WITH KISSINGER PROMINENT AMONG THEM) SOUGHT IN ORDER TO ENSURE HIM A SUBSTANTIVE ROLE AS VICE PRESIDENT. HAD FORD BEEN PREPARED TO PLAY SECOND FIDDLE WITHOUT CONDITIONS A REAGAN/FORD TICKET WOULD HAVE LOOKED VERY STRONG AND WOULD HAVE BEEN RAPTUROUSLY RECEIVED IN THE HEADY ATMOSPHERE OF THE CONVENTION. BUT FORD'S DEMAND FOR WHAT WOULD HAVE AMOUNTED TO A QUOTE CO-PRESIDENCY UNQUOTE WHICH WAS BOUND TO BE UNWORKABLE IN PRACTICE, TOGETHER WITH THE COMBINED AGE OF THE CANDIDATES (136) AND THE MUTUAL AND PUBLIC ANTAGONISM OF THEIR RELATIONS IN THE PAST, WOULD HAVE CREATED AN UNEASY SITUATION OPEN TO DAMAGING EXPLOITATION BY THE DEMOCRATS.

6. ALTHOUGH THE MANNER OF IT WAS MESSY, THE CHOICE OF BUSH AS RUNNING MATE BROADENS REAGAN'S APPEAL BOTH GEOGRAPHICALLY, NOTABLY IN THE NORTH EAST AND TEXAS, AND POLITICALLY; BUSH'S PRESENTATION IS MODERATE, ALTHOUGH HIS VIEWS ARE CONSERVATIVE; AND HE HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN SHELVING HIS SUPPORT FOR ERA AND FOR FREEDOM OF CHOICE ON ABORTION IN ORDER TO PROCLAIM HIS COMPLETE SUPPORT OF THE PARTY PLATFORM. WHILE SOME EXTREME CONSERVATIVES REMAIN UNHAPPY AT THE CHOICE, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT, FORD APART, BUSH WAS MORE ACCEPTABLE TO THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AS A WHOLE THAN ANY OTHER CANDIDATE AND BETTER PLACED TO DRAW ESSENTIAL CROSS-PARTY SUPPORT IN NOVEMBER. THE DEMOCRATS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY SEEK TO EXPLOIT THE UNTIDINESS OF BUSH'S NOMINATION AS EVIDENCE OF REAGAN'S INDECISION AND LACK OF JUDGEMENT. BUT PROVIDED THAT REAGAN AND BUSH CAN BE SEEN TO WORK COMFORTABLY TOGETHER, THIS EPISODE IS LIKELY TO BE A NINE-DAY'S WONDER.

7. THE REPUBLICANS HAVE SOME GROUNDS FOR THEIR CURRENT OPTIMISM. AT PRESENT REAGAN LEADS CARTER HANDILY IN THE POLLS AND HAS PUT CARTER ON THE DEFENSIVE OVER BOTH ECONOMIC POLICY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS. REAGAN'S ACCEPTANCE SPEECH WAS SUBSTANTIVE AND CREDIBLE AND, TOGETHER WITH HIS CHOICE OF BUSH, SHOWED THAT HE IS CAPABLE OF SEEKING TO REACH THE BROAD CONSTITUENCY HE NEEDS IF HE IS TO WIN IN NOVEMBER. HE HAS ALSO SO FAR MADE ALL THE RUNNING, CAMPAIGNING NON-STOP SINCE FEBRUARY. CARTER WILL HAVE TO CATCH UP; BUT DESPITE THE VULNERABILITY OF HIS RECORD, HE HAS THE GREAT PRACTICAL ADVANTAGES OF INCUMBENCY; AND HIS OWN CAMPAIGN SKILLS ARE FORMIDABLE AND, SO FAR THIS YEAR, LARGELY UNTAPPED. REAGAN'S ADVISERS ARE WELL AWARE THAT THEY HAVE A TOUGH FIGHT AHEAD OF THEM.

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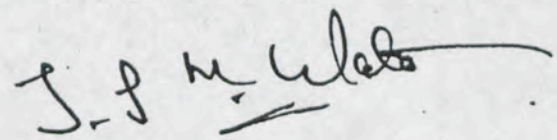
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North America DepartmentThe American Presidential Elections

As you know, Mr Bill Bundy, the Editor of 'Foreign Affairs', had an informal talk with the Secretary of State on Monday 16 June. Mr Bundy's message was very clear: Reagan might well win the Presidential elections, as discontent with Carter's economic performance mounted. Reagan was hopelessly simplistic and ignorant about foreign affairs, an atavistic nationalist who thought in terms of America's friends and enemies (including amongst the former Taiwan). On the Middle East he had a tendency to out-Begin Begin, though such was his lack of background on foreign affairs that he was quite capable of tilting unpredictably in the other direction, eg following a recent call by the Egyptian Ambassador. The conventional assumption was that Reagan would be protected by his advisers. But Mr Bundy did not have a high opinion of these. His guess was that, if Reagan won, his need for sophisticated expertise on foreign affairs could only lead him back to Dr Kissinger.

Mr Bundy had a very high opinion of Mr John Anderson who, despite his somewhat conservative fiscal views, was in his view by far the most intelligent and impressive of the three candidates. Although a rank outsider, his influence and possible performance should not be under-rated, particularly if the economic cards fell badly for the President.

The American Ambassador telephoned me this morning 'in line with the new dispensation on direct contacts with No. 10' to say that he was about to recommend to No. 10 that the Prime Minister should receive Mr George Schultz and Mr Henry Jackson (Schultz would be here on 24 June and Jackson on 3-4 July). Whatever happened in the elections, Jackson would in Mr Brewster's view continue to have an important influence on the National Security Council. If Reagan won, Schultz would be one of the more moderate of his advisers, and a call on the Prime Minister would help to advance his standing. He admitted that he was an oddly placed broker, but did not think that there was any chance of Washington being upset if Schultz were received at No. 10. He also thought that the Secretary of State might wish to see both men; I explained that he would be in Ankara during Mr Schultz's visit, but might wish to meet Mr Jackson.



(G G H Walden)

18 June 1980

cc: PS	PS/Mr Ridley	Sir A Acland	Lord Gordon Lennox
PS/LPS	PS/PUS	Lord Bridges	Mr Fergusson
PS/Mr Hurd	PS/Sir D Maitland	Mr Bullard	Planning Staff
M O'D B Alexander			NENAD

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