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FROM WASHINGTON 162230Z OCT 84.

TO PRIORITY F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 3096 OF 16 OCTOBER

INFO SAVING NATO POSTS, U.S.C.G.'S, BIS NEW YORK, MOSCOW, TOKYO,  
DUBLIN, UKREP BRUSSELS.

MY TELNO 3048: PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.

SUMMARY

1. NEITHER SIDE LOST FROM THE BUSH/FERRARO DEBATE ON 11 OCTOBER AND THE PERFORMANCES OF BOTH PROBABLY STRENGTHENED THEIR RESPECTIVE TICKETS. THE OPINION POLL GAP CONTINUES TO NARROW BUT THE OVERALL ELECTORAL PICTURE REMAINS UNCHANGED, WITH REAGAN STILL AHEAD IN EVERY STATE EXCEPT THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

DETAIL

2. THE COMMENTATORS AGREE THAT BUSH AND FERRARO BOTH IMPROVED THEIR STANDING IN THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE ON 11 OCTOBER, BUT WITHOUT A CLEAR VICTORY FOR EITHER. AS EXPECTED, BUSH WAS MORE AUTHORITATIVE ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. BUT FERRARO SCORED SOME GOOD POINTS ON DOMESTIC ISSUES, AND RESPONDED WELL TO A SLIGHTLY PATRONISING REMARK FROM BUSH. THE FACT THAT SHE HELD HER OWN AGAINST SUCH AN EXPERIENCED OPPONENT HAS PROBABLY ENHANCED HER CREDIBILITY. BUSH, FOR HIS PART, HAD MORE TO LOSE FROM A FURTHER MISHAP FOLLOWING THE PRESIDENT'S SHOWING IN THE FIRST DEBATE. BUT HIS CONFIDENT PERFORMANCE, EVEN IF SOMETIMES WIDE OF THE MARK ON FACTS (EG WHEN HE CLAIMED THAT THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION HAD INCREASED SPENDING ON SOCIAL PROGRAMMES), AND OCCASIONALLY A TOUCH FRANTIC, SEEMS TO HAVE SUCCEEDED IN AVOIDING CONTRIBUTING TO ANY EROSION OF SUPPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT.

3. PUBLIC RECRIMINATION CONTINUES WITHIN THE REAGAN CAMP ABOUT WHAT WENT WRONG IN THE FIRST DEBATE. THE LATEST POLLS INDICATE THAT, WHILE THE GAP HAS CLOSED A LITTLE FURTHER, THE PRESIDENT IS STILL AHEAD IN EVERY STATE, WITH NO MORE THAN NINE STATES (INCLUDING NEW YORK) AT PRESENT REGARDED AS MARGINAL AND MONDALE AHEAD ONLY IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

4. THE STAKES WILL BE HIGH FOR THE SECOND PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE ON 21 OCTOBER, BUT REAGAN HAS THE ADVANTAGE THAT HIS SUPPORT IS WELL SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE CONTRY. IN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE EVEN A SMALL ADVANTAGE IN THE POPULAR VOTE, IF EVENLY DISTRIBUTED, CAN GIVE A LANDSLIDE RESULT.

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FCO PASS SAVING:-

ANKARA, ATHENS, BRUSSELS, BONN, COPENHAGEN, LISBON,  
LUXEMBOURG, MADRID, UKDEL STOCKHOLM, DUBLIN,  
UKREP BRUSSELS, OTTAWA, OSLO, PARIS, ROME, REYKJAVIK,  
THE HAGUE, UKDEL NATO, UKDEL VIENNA, MOSCOW, TOKYO.

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