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DESKBY FCO 081630Z

DESKBY UKREP BRUSSELS 081700Z

FM PARIS 081555Z APR 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 328 OF 8 APRIL 1982

INFO IMMEDIATE UKREP BRUSSELS

MY TEL NO 327: EC/ARGENTINA

1. WE HAVE CONTINUED TO PRESS AT ALL LEVELS IN THE FRENCH ADMINISTRATION FOR POSITIVE DECISIONS AT POCO AND COREPER TOMORROW.

2. THE RESPONSE HAS BEEN TO EMPHASISE THE STRONG POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR BRITAIN AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL COUPLED WITH ASSURANCES THAT FRANCE WOULD ADOPT A POSITION AT THE MEETING OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE TOMORROW IN LINE WITH PRESIDENT MITTERRAND'S STATEMENTS AND THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS COMMUNIQUE. AT THE SAME TIME IT HAS BEEN STRESSED THAT THE DEGREE OF SOLIDARITY AND POLITICAL SUPPORT EXPRESSED BY MEMBER STATES AS A WHOLE AT POCO IN THE MORNING WILL BE OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE FOR THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON THE ECONOMIC MEASURES TO BE DISCUSSED AT COREPER IN THE AFTERNOON.

3. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND BOCHET (QUAI), WHO IS COORDINATING THE FRENCH POSITION, WOULD NOT GIVE ANY PRECISE INDICATIONS OF THE LIKELY FRENCH POSITION AT COREPER. HE COMMENTED THAT THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS ON EXCLUSION FROM GSP HAD BEEN RECEIVED AND DID NOT LOOK THOUGH THEY WOULD CAUSE ANY PROBLEM. THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS ON ARGENTINE IMPORTS HAD NOT BEEN RECEIVED. HE COULD SAY NOTHING AT THIS STAGE ABOUT EXPORT CREDITS. BOCHET FINALLY STRESSED THAT THIS RELUCTANCE TO GO INTO DETAIL ON THE ECONOMIC MEASURES SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS AN INDICATION OF LACK OF SUPPORT. THE FRENCH DELEGATION, WHICH WOULD HAVE INSTRUCTIONS BY TOMORROW, WOULD BE GUIDED BY PRESIDENT MITTERRAND'S EXPRESSION OF POLITICAL SOLIDARITY WITH BRITAIN.

4. IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED NOT TO GET AHEAD OF THE PACK AND WANTS TO KNOW WHERE OTHERS STAND BEFORE COMMITTING ITSELF TO TAKING ECONOMIC MEASURES. THERE WERE HINTS FROM BOCHET THAT THE FRENCH MIGHT STILL HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE LEGAL BASIS FOR ACTION, DESPITE THE EFFORTS MADE IN BRUSSELS AND HERE TO SET THEIR MINDS AT REST. THE OUTCOME OF THE POCO MEETING WILL EVIDENTLY BE A KEY FACTOR.

FRETWELL.

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