

GRS 520

UNCLASSIFIED

FM PARIS 101845Z MAY 82

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 454 OF 10 MAY 1982

INFO: UKREP BRUSSELS, ATHENS, BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN, THE HAGUE, LUXEMBOURG, ROME, DUBLIN, BONN.

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FALKLANDS: FRENCH ATTITUDE

1. TODAY'S (10 MAY) PRESS QUOTES CHEYSSON AS SAYING ON HIS RETURN FROM THE MEETING OF EC FOREIGN MINISTERS AT VILLERS-LE-TEMPLE THAT NEVER IN THE PAST HAD EUROPE MADE SUCH AN EFFORT OF SOLIDARITY AS IT HAD MADE OVER THE FALKLANDS. THE ITALIANS AND THE IRISH HAD BEEN "HEROIC" YET "THIS IS THE MOMENT THAT BRITAIN CHOOSES TO BREAK JUST OVER A FEW HUNDRED THOUSAND ECUS". CHEYSSON IS NEVERTHELESS QUOTED AS REAFFIRMING FRANCE'S "COMPLETE SOLIDARITY" WITH BRITAIN OVER THE FALKLANDS AND AS SAYING THAT FRANCE, UNLIKE SOME OTHERS, MADE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE FALKLANDS AND THE BUDGET ISSUES. IN CHEYSSON'S OPINION ONLY "ACTS OF WAR" COULD MAKE THE COMMUNITY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT CHANGE. HOWEVER HE IS REPORTED AS ADDING, APPARENTLY ALLUDING TO THE TREATY OF ROME AND COMMUNITY RULES ON AGRICULTURAL PRICE-FIXING, THAT "YOU CAN'T IN A MEETING LIKE YESTERDAY'S START BY TALKING FOR HOURS ABOUT BRITAIN'S EXEMPLARY ROLE IN DEFENCE OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS WITHOUT NOTICING THAT BRITAIN IS VIOLATING AN INTERNATIONAL TREATY WHICH IT AGREED TO SIGN".
2. MUCH OF THE PRESS HARPS ON THE SAME THEME. IN AN EDITORIAL THIS AFTERNOON'S LE MONDE SAYS THAT THE REST OF THE COMMUNITY HAS NOT STINTED IN ITS SUPPORT FOR BRITAIN OVER THE FALKLANDS AND ALL IT HAD BEEN REWARDED WITH WAS "BLACKMAIL" OVER THE BUDGET AND "UNACCEPTABLE" POLITICO - MILITARY ACTIONS IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC. MOST OF THE PRESS REGARDS VILLERS - LE - TEMPLE AS HAVING BEEN A FAILURE FOR EUROPE AS A WHOLE ON EC ISSUES AND A DISAPPOINTMENT FOR BRITAIN AS REGARDS RENEWAL OF SANCTIONS.
3. ON THE CONFLICT GENERALLY, THE PRESS IS WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS UNSYMPATHETIC TO THE LATEST BRITISH MOVES. THE EXTENSION OF THE EXCLUSION ZONE HAS TENDED TO BE SEEN AS AN UNNECESSARY ESCALATION INCREASING THE DANGERS OF THE CONFLICT SPREADING. IN A FRONT PAGE ARTICLE APPEARING UNDER THE HEADING "A COCK FIGHT", THE EDITOR - IN - CHIEF OF LE MONDE DESCRIBED THE CONFLICT ON 8 MAY AS "ABSURD". PAPERS REPORT THE FINDING OF AN OPINION POLL THAT 61% OF FRENCHMEN (WITH 26% DISSIDENTING) BELIEVED THAT FRANCE SHOULD REFUSE TO SUPPORT BRITAIN IF SUCH SUPPORT MADE FRANCE RUN

/ THE RISK

THE RISK OF BECOMING DIRECTLY INVOLVED. COMMENTING ON THIS IN AN EDITORIAL LE QUOTIDIEN (RIGHT - WING) GOES AGAINST THE TREND OF FRENCH PRESS OPINION IN REMARKING THAT 26% WAS PROBABLY MORE THAN THE PROPORTION OF FRENCHMEN WILLING TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE BRITAIN IN 1939. LE QUOTIDIEN SAYS THAT "EUROPE IS QUITE WILLING TO LOOK AFTER ITS FRUIT AND VEGETABLE BUSINESS AND HAGGLE FOR DECADES OVER WINE TARIFFS OR THE PRICE OF MUTTON, BUT IT IS NOT READY TO SIDE WITH ONE OF ITS OWN, BRITAIN, AT A TIME WHEN THE LATTER MOST NEEDS A WALL OF SOLIDARITY AROUND IT". COMMUNITY MINISTERS APPARENTLY INTENDED TO BARGAIN THEIR SUPPORT FOR CHANGES IN THE UK ATTITUDE "ON THE ONLY QUESTIONS WHICH SEEM TO OCCUPY THE ATTENTION OF THOSE GENTLEMEN: THE REDUCTION OF THE BRITISH CONTRIBUTION TO THE BUDGET AND AGRICULTURAL PRICE - FIXING. THAT HAS A NAME: BLACKMAIL".

FRETWELL

[ADVANCED AS REQUESTED]

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