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FM UKREP BRUSSELS
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 4540
OF 152105Z DECEMBER 86
INFO ROUTINE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY POSTS

FRAME GENERAL

FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL, 15/16 DECEMBER: EX NOVO REVIEW

SUMMARY

1. LUNCH DISCUSSION ON WHETHER THE COMMISSION SHOULD TABLE PROPOSALS BEFORE DELORS' TOUR. DISCRETION PREVAILED: PROCEDURE IS COREPER BRAINSTORMING ON 19 DECEMBER; COMMISSION ON 22 DECEMBER; TOUR BY DELORS: PROPOSALS OUT BY ABOUT 15 FEBRUARY: 'GYMNICH' MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS IN MARCH. ALL AGREED THAT ABSENCE OF COMMISSION PROPOSALS BY THE END OF THIS YEAR WOULD NOT PREJUDICE THE UNDERTAKING TO TAKE DECISIONS ON EX NOVO BY 1 JANUARY 1988.

DETAIL

2. DELORS RAISED THE SUBJECT OVER LUNCH AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, WHICH HAD ENDORSED THE IDEA OF HIS TOUR OF CAPITALS. THIS POSED INSTITUTIONAL AND PRACTICAL QUESTIONS. THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL HAD NO FORMAL STATUS: SO WAS THIS DECISION BACKED BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS? OTHER COMMISSIONERS WERE NOT HAPPY, PREFERRING THE COMMISSION TO MAKE PROPOSALS BEFORE DELORS SET OFF. HE HAD PERSUADED THEM WITH DIFFICULTY THAT HIS COURSE WAS PREFERABLE. IF PROPOSALS APPEARED ONLY, SAY, ON 15 FEBRUARY 1987, NO-ONE SHOULD ALLEGE THAT A DECISION ON 1 JANUARY 1988 WAS RENDERED IMPOSSIBLE THEREBY. HE OBTAINED REASSURANCE THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD NOT BE ACCUSED OF BREAKING THE FONTAINEBLEAU UNDERTAKING TO PRODUCE PROPOSALS ONE YEAR BEFORE 1 JANUARY 1988. HE ASKED WHETHER THE TOUR WOULD BE OF PRACTICAL USE WITHOUT ANY PREPARATION, AND WONDERED WHETHER IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO HAVE A KIND OF TECHNICAL GYMNICH FIRST - LIKE THE STRESA MEETING BEFORE MILAN. HE LOOKED FORWARD TO SEEING COREPER AMBASSADORS ON 19 DECEMBER. WOULD THAT BE ENOUGH? COULD FOREIGN MINISTERS SET ASIDE A DAY TO MEET HIM BEFORE HE SET OFF? HE LIKED THE STRESA CONCEPT.

3. YOU SAID THAT NO-ONE UNDERESTIMATED THE SCALE OF THE COMMISSION'S TASK, AS HEADS OF GOVERNMENT HAD STRESSED. THE TOUR OF CAPITALS WAS VALUABLE: SO WAS THE FORTHCOMING PRESENTATION TO COREPER. THE IDEA OF A TECHNICAL PRESENTATION TO FOREIGN MINISTERS COULD COME IN USEFUL LATER.

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4. ELLEMANN JENSEN WANTED COMMISSION PROPOSALS BEFORE THE END OF 1986, DISLIKED THE PROSPECT OF DELAY UNTIL 15 FEBRUARY OR A LEAKY TOUR OF CAPITALS, AND WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE PROBLEMS WHICH COULD FALL TO THE DANISH PRESIDENCY IN THE SECOND HALF OF NEXT YEAR.

5. TINDEMANS SUGGESTED THAT THE PRESENTATION SHOULD BE DONE AFTER THE TOUR OF CAPITALS, ALTHOUGH HE COULD ACCEPT A MINISTERIAL MEETING BEFOREHAND. DELORS' JOB WOULD BE TO EXPLAIN THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION, NOT TO PUT OPTIONS, WHICH WAS NOT THE COMMISSION'S ROLE. ANDREOTTI AGREED TO THE IDEA OF THE TOUR OF CAPITALS WHILE EXPRESSING ANXIETY ABOUT THE RESEARCH COUNCIL AND MEDITERRANEAN PRODUCTS BEING SQUEEZED AS A RESULT OF THE BUDGET CRISIS. STAVENHAGEN (FRG) STRESSED THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE TOUR, WHICH WOULD BE DESIGNED TO ASSIST CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS WHEN THEY CAME.

6. YOU SUGGESTED THAT THE SEQUENCE SHOULD BE

- (A) PRESENTATION TO COREPER
- (B) TOUR OF CAPITALS IN THE NEW YEAR
- (C) GYMNICH-TYPE MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS.

THIS WOULD MAKE DEMANDS ON DELORS BUT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO CARRY THROUGH. VAN DEN BROEK (NETHERLANDS) SAID THAT THE COREPER PRESENTATION SHOULD ALLOW TIME TO BRIEF CAPITALS BEFORE DELORS' TOUR, WHICH WOULD MEAN PRESENTING PROPOSALS BEFORE THE END OF DECEMBER. MARTINS (PORTUGAL) AGREED ON THE NEED FOR AN EARLY INDICATION OF COMMISSION WORK: BUT STAVENHAGEN SAID THAT DELORS' TOUR MUST PRECEDE PROPOSALS, AND SUPPORTED YOUR PROCEDURAL SUGGESTIONS.

7. DELORS AGREED TO BRIEF COREPER BEFORE THE COMMISSION MEETING ON 22 DECEMBER. THERE WAS NO CONSENSUS ON THE IDEA OF A GYMNICH BEFORE HIS TRIP. SO HE WOULD TAKE SOUNDINGS IN CAPITALS WITH A VIEW TO FORMAL PROPOSALS THEREAFTER. HE WOULD NOT PRESENT COMPROMISES. THAT WOULD BE THE BELGIAN PRESIDENCY'S JOB.

8. ANDREOTTI WONDERED ON WHAT BASIS DELORS' CONTACTS WOULD TAKE PLACE. HE WAS NOT SURE WHAT PURPOSE THE COREPER BRAINSTORMING WOULD SERVE: IT WOULD ONLY BE A WAY OF TRANSMITTING INFORMATION TO CAPITALS. HOW DID COREPER FIT WITH COMMISSION DECISIONS ON 21/22 DECEMBER? DELORS CONFIRMED THAT NO DOCUMENT WOULD BE ADOPTED AND TRANSMITTED ON THE 22ND. HE QUESTIONED THE USEFULNESS OF CIRCULATING A PREPARATORY ANALYTICAL DOCUMENT BEFORE THE TOUR: IT WOULD BE SURE TO LEAK. THE GREATER THE PUBLIC DRAMATISATION, THE SMALLER THE RESULT. DELORS WAS CONTENT TO SPEND UP TO ONE DAY IN EACH CAPITAL, THE PROGRAMME TO BE ORGANISED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, WHICH WOULD DETERMINE WHOM HE SAW. HE OBTAINED CONFIRMATION (AGAIN)

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THAT THERE WOULD BE NO CRITICISM FROM MEMBER STATES THAT DECISIONS BY 1 JANUARY 1988 WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE ON THIS BASIS. HIS FIRST PORT OF CALL WOULD BE BRUSSELS: THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT. HE SUGGESTED A GYMNICH MEETING IN MARCH. YOU CONCLUDED THAT THIS WAS AGREED.

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