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ccp

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref:

Your ref:

Andrew Turnbull Esq CB
Principal Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
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Dear Andrew,

21 JUN 1991

FRENCH SEAMEN'S STRIKE AT CALAIS

As promised, I enclose a short note about this week's strike by French seamen at the port of Calais.

The situation has improved since we spoke yesterday. British ferries are no longer blockaded and the threat of the strike spreading appears to be receding. We shall, however, continue to keep you in touch with developments and will, if necessary, provide an update on Monday morning before the Prime Minister's visit to Dunkirk.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Gozney in the Foreign Secretary's office.

Yours ever,

Peter McCarthy

PETER McCARTHY
Private Secretary

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO DUNKIRK - MONDAY 24 JUNE

FRENCH SEAMEN'S STRIKE AT CALAIS

1. The strike by seamen employed by the French end of the Sealink operation - the Societe Nouvelle d'Armement Transmanche (SNAT) which had brought ferry services between Calais and Dover to a complete halt by Thursday has now calmed down.

2. The seamen are protesting about the company's proposed changes in working hours from 24 hours on board/48 hours rest to 48 hours on board/48 hours rest. Following industrial disruption last week, SNAT suspended sailings on Friday 14 June and by Thursday all sailings out of the port including British Sealink and P&O had been halted. As of Friday however the port had returned to normal working except for the services operated by SNAT which are still being blocked. The French seamen were meeting on Friday and the SNAT works Council is to meet on Monday to try to resolve the dispute. The Sally Line service to Dunkirk was not been affected.

3. The French authorities have not become involved in the dispute so far.

4. Lord Sterling, Chairman of P&O, contacted No. 10 and the Private Office of the Secretary of State for Transport last week expressing concern about the situation and asking the government to take action. Given that the situation seems to be resolving itself there seems no need for HMG to become involved and the Foreign Office have advised that this is clearly a matter best left to the French authorities and that any HMG involvement would be unwelcome.

**International Shipping Policy 1
Department of Transport**

21 June 1991

