CONFIDENTIAL

PS

POLITICAL COMMITTEE; EC IMPORT BAN

1. Mr Cooper telephoned at 1700 on 15 May to report that four delegations had not been able to agree on prolongation of the import ban in the Political Committee. France and the FRG thought that a decision should be taken by Ministers. Italy and Ireland were not able to agree to a renewal but did not oppose reference to Ministers. Denmark placed ~~There was~~ heavy emphasis on technical legal problems. They even explained that legislation had been prepared which could be put into effect in two days ~~after~~ if it was agreed that action should be taken under Article 224.

2. ~~Mr Cooper added that~~ France believed that whatever decision was taken should be taken by the Ten and that discussion should continue until a consensus could be reached. There was an implication that such discussion~~s~~ should proceed at a working level. The Italians presented a comprehensive exposé of their internal political difficulties. On a personal basis the Italian representative considered that a "more selective" decision might be possible or alternatively that a temporary suspension of the import ban might be agreed as a gesture of goodwill to Argentina, to be reexamined in the light of Argentine reactions. The Presidency urged the Italian representative to withdraw such ideas since they would give the wrong signal to Buenos Aires. There was a need to preserve the unanimity of the Ten.

3. For the rest, all other delegations were solidly in favour of renewal including the Danes (the Danes added the further difficulty under instructions that Political Directors and Permanent Representatives could not discuss their legal difficulties which could be resolved only between Ministers).

4. There was confusion about the timing of a Ministerial meeting. The FRG delegation and the Presidency had different messages about Genscher's availability. Genscher, Colombo and possibly Cheysson appear to be in favour of a decision at the last minute ie. at a meeting on Monday ~~afternoon~~ evening which the Commission thought would be in time to secure continuation of the ban. All others were in favour of a meeting on Sunday afternoon justifying their preference~~s~~ with a variety of arguments not least of which was the risk of a negative decision by accident ~~not design if~~ should legal and technical difficulties prove~~d~~ insoluble at a last minute meeting.

5. Mr Bullard ~~said~~ had informed PoCo that the Secretary of State would be available from 3.30pm onwards in Luxembourg. ~~but~~ After consultation with you, I suggested that 4pm would be a safer time to offer.

6. Mr Cooper thought that the Presidency ~~were~~ would now propose ~~proposing~~ that the Ministerial meeting of the Ten should replace the Berlin dinner on Sunday evening. The Political Committee would shortly reconvene to agree a time.

/7.

Reference .....

7. I drew Mr Cooper's attention to today's telegram from Rome (number 263) and suggested that if any further lobbying in Rome was thought desirable, it would be easier for Brussels to ensure that Rome had the necessary background to this afternoon's discussion (Mr Arculus has a channel to the MFA open at 7pm local this evening if the need should arise).

15 May 1982

A J Payne

cc: PS/PUS
Mr Giffard
Mr Hannay
Mr Fearn
ECD(E)
Emergency Unit