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**CONFIDENTIAL**

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FM ROME  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELNO 777  
OF 191010Z SEPTEMBER 85

YOUR TELNO 384: ANGLO/ITALIAN SUMMIT.

1. AS CRAXI'S DIPLOMATIC ADVISER, BADINI, WAS FULLY OCCUPIED YESTERDAY IN THE PREPARATIONS FOR CRAXI'S VISIT TO SOMALIA, EGYPT AND SUDAN THIS WEEK, I ASKED RICHARDSON TO CALL ON HIS DEPUTY, VISCONTI, AND TO CONVEY THE PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE. VISCONTI TOOK IT CALMLY. HE SAID THAT CRAXI HAD HIMSELF HAD TO POSTPONE ENGAGEMENTS IN THE PAST, AND WOULD QUITE UNDERSTAND OUR ASSURANCES THAT ONLY COMMITMENTS OF THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE WOULD HAVE PREVENTED THE PRIME MINISTER FROM ATTENDING A SUMMIT TO WHICH BOTH SIDES ATTACHED GREAT VALUE. WE DID NOT OF COURSE SPECULATE ON WHAT THESE COMMITMENTS MIGHT BE.

2. VISCONTI AGREED WITH US THAT THE LINE TO TAKE WITH THE PRESS (GIVEN THAT THE SUMMIT HAS NOT BEEN FORMALLY ANNOUNCED) WAS THAT BOTH SIDES WERE STILL DISCUSSING SUITABLE DATES FOR THE NEXT MEETING. WE HAVE BRIEFED HM CONSUL IN FLORENCE ACCORDINGLY. THE AUTHORITIES THERE WERE NATURALLY AWARE OF THE PLANNED OCTOBER DATE AND THERE HAD BEEN MENTION IN THEIR LOCAL PRESS OF A FORTHCOMING SUMMIT. BUT I THINK OUR LINE WILL HOLD FOR THE TIME BEING.

3. I NOTE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAS UNDERTAKEN TO SUGGEST FRESH DATES FOR HER NEXT MEETING WITH CRAXI. I WOULD FIND IT WORRYING IF THERE WERE NO SUCH MEETING BEFORE THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL IN LUXEMBOURG ON DECEMBER 2 AND 3. THAT WOULD REPEAT THE ABSENCE OF THOROUGH BILATERAL DISCUSSION BETWEEN OUR HEADS OF GOVERNMENT WHICH OCCURRED BEFORE THE MILAN EUROPEAN COUNCIL. FOR THE REASONS SET OUT IN MY LETTER OF 19 JULY TO BRAITHWAITE I RECOMMEND THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD TRY TO FIND A SMALL GAP IN HER PROGRAMME FOR A WORKING VISIT BY CRAXI TO LONDON, PERHAPS AFTER THE WEU MEETING IN MID-NOVEMBER WHEN WE HOPE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SEE ANDREOTTI TO DISCUSS

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/ PROSPECTS

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PROSPECTS FOR THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL. A WORKING DINNER SHOULD SUFFICE, WITH CRAXI LEAVING EITHER LATE THAT NIGHT OR EARLY THE NEXT MORNING. IF I AM RIGHT IN THINKING THAT WE AND THE ITALIANS WILL ESSENTIALLY BE COMPETING FOR FRENCH AND GERMAN SUPPORT, A MEETING BETWEEN CRAXI AND THE PRIME MINISTER SHORTLY BEFORE LUXEMBOURG WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR PREPARATION FOR THE COUNCIL. HIS ABSENCE WOULD BE NOTICED HERE. SUCH A MEETING WOULD ALSO HELP TO DEFLECT PRESSURE FOR AN EARLY FULL SCALE SUMMIT, WHICH I PRESUME WOULD NOT BE WELCOME UNTIL THE NEW YEAR.

4. I SHALL BE MAKING THE PROPOSAL FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTERS (PARAGRAPH 2 OF TUR) TO THE MFA LATER TODAY. ANDREOTTI LEAVES FOR THE UNGA SHORTLY AND YOU MAY BE ABLE TO MENTION THIS IDEA TO HIM YOURSELF: I HEAR THAT YOU MAY MEET HIM AT DINNER IN NEW YORK NEXT TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 24.

BRIDGES

LIMITED  
WED  
ECD (1)  
ECD (E)  
RID  
PROTOCOL D  
PS  
PS/LADY YOUNG  
PS/MR RIFKIND  
PS/MR RENTON  
PS/PUS  
MR DEREK THOMAS  
MR GOODALL  
MR BRAITHWAITE  
MR RENWICK

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