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 FM OSLO
 TO PRIORITY FCO
 TELNO 41
 OF 171218Z MARCH 86

NY TELNO 33 : PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT

1. AT DINNER OVER THE WEEKEND FOREIGN MINISTER STRAY OFFERED THE OPINION THAT TROMSO WOULD BE A MORE INTERESTING ARCTIC TOWN FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO VISIT THAN BODO. ALTHOUGH IT WOULD INVOLVE AN HOUR OR SO MORE FLYING THIS SHOULD NOT MATTER PROVIDED A REASONABLY EARLY START FROM LONDON WAS ACCEPTABLE. FOUR OR FOUR AND A HALF HOURS IN TROMSO WOULD BE ENOUGH FOR AN INTERESTING VISIT AND LUNCH THERE WOULD BE KEPT SHORT. PROVIDED THE DEPARTURE FOR OSLO WAS NOT LATER THAN 1630 THERE WOULD BE PLENTY OF TIME TO SETTLE IN BEFORE A GOVERNMENT DINNER HERE ON THE FIRST NIGHT.
2. ON OSLO ENGAGEMENTS OTHER THAN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, STRAY SAID THAT HAD THERE BEEN MORE TIME THE KING WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE WANTED TO OFFER MRS THATCHER LUNCH. THIS WOULD HOWEVER BE IMPOSSIBLE SHOULD IT BE HER WISH TO OFFER SOME RETURN ENTERTAINMENT: IN THAT CASE HE FELT AN AUDIENCE WITH THE KING MIGHT BE THE BEST COMPROMISE.
3. HE AGREED THAT SHOULD IT SUIT THE PRIME MINISTER'S WISHES A BRIEF VISIT TO AFNORTH WOULD BE BOTH INTERESTING AND APPROPRIATE. GENERAL HOWLETT TELLS ME THAT A VISIT INCLUDING HIS UNDERGROUND COMMAND CENTRE NEED TAKE NO MORE THAN 50 MINUTES, NOT INCLUDING DRIVING TIME (ROUGHLY 15 MINUTES EACH WAY).

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