

GPS700

CONFIDENTIAL

2 tels : read in full  
(not a very happy story)

CONFIDENTIAL

FRAME GENERAL

FM UKREP BRUSSELS 241517Z MARCH 88

TO FLASH FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1654 OF 24 MAR

INFO IMMEDIATE COPENHAGEN, THE HAGUE, ROME, DUBLIN, PARIS, BONN,

LUXEMBOURG.

INFO SAVING BRUSSELS.

POSTPONEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL.

1. PLAJA CALLED A MEETING OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES WHICH RAN ON INTO A COREPER LUNCH WITH JENKINS. THERE WAS CONFUSION.

2. THE COMMISSION SPOKESMAN HAD ALREADY, IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS, CONFIRMED THAT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL MEETING HAD BEEN POSTPONED. THIS WAS DONE AT THE MOMENT WHEN PLAJA WAS SEEING JENKINS TO DISCUSS THE MATTER. GENERAL DISCONTENT.

3. PLAJA READ OUT A LONG STATEMENT ABOUT WHY THE PRESIDENCY WAS POSTPONING THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL (TEXT AVAILABLE IN LONDON) WHICH PUT MORE EMPHASIS ON THE NEED FOR BETTER PREPARATION AND A BETTER ATMOSPHERE THAN ON THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION AS A REASON FOR THE POSTPONEMENT. I ASKED WHETHER A DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN AND QUESTIONED WHETHER IT WAS ONE THE PRESIDENCY COULD TAKE ON ITS OWN. AS I UNDERSTOOD OUR POSITION (TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS WITH FRANKLIN AND ALEXANDER) WE WERE PREPARED FOR A SHORT POSTPONEMENT PROVIDED THAT AN AGREED DATE IN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE WEEKS WAS AGREED FIRST. WHAT DATE WERE THE PRESIDENCY PROPOSING? JENKINS INTERVENED UNHELPFULLY TO SAY THAT IT WAS NO GOOD QUESTIONING THE DECISION TO POSTPONE WHICH COULD NOT NOW BE REVERSED. PLAJA SAID THAT A DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN AND ITALIAN EMBASSIES WOULD BE IN TOUCH ABOUT A NEW DATE IN CAPITALS.

4. NANTEUIL INTERVENED TWICE TO STRESS THAT THE DELAY HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH FRANCE. THEY HAD ONLY AGREED WHEN THEY HEARD THAT THE UK HAD AGREED. HE LET DROP 28/29 APRIL AS POSSIBLE NEW DATES. I SUGGESTED 14/15 OR 21/22 APRIL.

5. POENSGEN SAID THAT THE GERMANS COULD AGREE TO A POSTPONEMENT IF EVERYONE ELSE COULD AGREE AND PROVIDED AN EARLY DATE COULD BE FOUND. JENKINS AGREED ABOUT THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF AN EARLY DATE AND SUGGESTED THAT 28/29 APRIL WAS TOO CLOSE TO VENICE.

CONFIDENTIAL

/6. DONDELINGER

CONFIDENTIAL

6. DONDELINGER SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT IT WAS ALREADY HIGH TIME THAT HEADS OF GOVERNMENT GOT TOGETHER. BUT HE WAS NOT WORRIED ABOUT THE NEW DATE BEING CLOSE TO VENICE BECAUSE IN ANY CASE TWO BITES WOULD BE NEEDED AT THE UK BUDGET CHERRY. I SAID THAT I HOPED THAT THIS UNFORTUNATE IDEA WOULD NOT GET INTO THE PRESS. IT WAS GOING TO BE DIFFICULT ENOUGH MEETING CRITICISM OF THE DEALY.

7. IT HAD BY NOW EMERGED THAT THE FRENCH, GERMANS AND OURSELVES HAD BEEN CONSULTED A DAY BEFORE THE OTHERS. THIS PRODUCED VIGOROUS PROTESTS FROM THE DUTCH AND BELGIANS.

8. THERE WAS CONFUSED DISCUSSION OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR LINKAGE. NANTEUIL SAID THAT THE UK PROBLEM WOULD NOT BE SETTLED WITHOUT SETTLEMENT OF THE LINKAGE ITEMS, PARTICULARLY THE CAP PRICES AND ECONOMIES. THE LATTER HAD TO BE LOOKED AT WITH THE UK BUDGET PROBLEM SINCE THE DECISIONS ON PRICES AND ECONOMIES WOULD EFFECT THE UK BUDGET CONTRIBUTION. SEVERAL OTHERS SAID THAT THE CAP PRICES AND ECONOMIES MUST BE TAKEN IN APRIL BEFORE THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL. I SAID THAT NOW THAT THE FRENCH HAD LINKED THE TWO ISSUES I DOUBTED IF THEY COULD BE TAKEN SEPARATELY IN ADVANCE.

9. IT WAS AGREED THAT PLAJA WOULD FIND OUT WHETHER ROME WANTED TO TRY TO FIX THE NEW DATES DIRECT IN CAPITALS OR TO TRY TO DO SO AMONG THE NINE HERE.

FCO PASS ADVANCE COPIES TO:-

FCO        FS/SOFS, PS/LPS, PS/PUS, BRIDGES, HANNAY, SPRECKLEY,  
          FITZHERBERT  
CAB        FRANKLIN, WILLIAMS  
TSY        PS/COFE, COUZENS, ASHFORD  
NO.10.    ALEXANDER

BUTLER.

FRAME GENERAL

[ADVANCED AS REQUESTED]

ECD

2  
CONFIDENTIAL