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FM WASHINGTON 050310Z FEB 82
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 365 OF 4 FEBRUARY

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INFO IMMEDIATE BANGKOK (FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY)
UKDEL NATO

YOUR TELNO 169: PRESIDENT REAGAN'S VISIT.

1. THIS HAS BEEN A BAD AND TOPSY-TURVY DAY, THAT AT ANY RATE HAS ENDED BETTER THAN IT BEGAN.

2. IT BEGAN WITH EAGLEBURGER TELEPHONING ME TO SAY THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT IT HAD BEEN DECIDED THE PREVIOUS EVENING IN THE WHITE HOUSE THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD FAVOUR HAVING THE NATO SUMMIT IN BRUSSELS. I ASKED WHY THIS WAS SO BECAUSE IT SEEMED TO CONTRADICT THE EARLY AMERICAN VIEW. EAGLEBURGER SAID THAT HE DID NOT REALLY KNOW HIMSELF BUT HE IMAGINED THAT IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTIES WITH THE GERMANS. I SAID THAT IF THE NATO SUMMIT WAS IN BRUSSELS I WOULD ASSUME THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD GO TO LONDON JUST BEFORE IT AND AFTER THE VISIT TO ROME ON 7 JUNE. EAGLEBURGER SAID THAT HE DID NOT KNOW ABOUT THIS. I DID NOT LIKE THE SOUND OF HIS HESITATIONS AND TOLD HIM THAT IT WOULD GIVE A PARTICULARLY BAD IMPRESSION IF AFTER ALL THE DISCUSSIONS WE HAD HAD, THE QUEEN'S AND THE PRIME MINISTER'S INVITATIONS EXTENDED A LONG WAY BACK, WERE JUST CAST ASIDE. EAGLEBURGER SAID THAT HE WOULD GO INTO IT FURTHER AND GET IN TOUCH WITH ME AGAIN.

3. AFTER SOME DIFFICULTY I MANAGED TO REACH DEAVER, TO WHOM I SAID THAT I HAD HEARD THAT THE WHITE HOUSE HAD DECIDED THAT THEY WANTED THE NATO SUMMIT IN BRUSSELS. DEAVER SAID THAT THIS WAS SO. AL HAIG HAD SPOKEN TO SOMEONE IN LONDON WHO HAD GIVEN HIM THE IMPRESSION THAT THE BRITISH WOULD REALLY PREFER TO HAVE THE MEETING IN BRUSSELS. THE AMERICANS DID NOT WANT TO PUSH US TOO FAR. I SAID THAT WE HAD DECIDED UPON BRUSSELS IN ORDER TO SUIT THE AMERICANS. BUT IF THE SUMMIT WAS HELD IN BRUSSELS, I WAS ASSUMING THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD GO TO LONDON JUST BEFORE IT. DEAVER SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT WE HAD BETTER DROP THE IDEA OF A VISIT TO THE UK AT THIS TIME. PERHAPS IT COULD TAKE PLACE AT A LATER DATE ON ANOTHER OCCASION.

4. DEAVER THEN SAID THAT HAIG WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE GERMANS IF THE PRESIDENT CAME TO LONDON. I SAID THAT WHAT DEAVER HAD TOLD ME WOULD CREATE THE WORST POSSIBLE IMPRESSION IN LONDON.

CONFIDENTIAL

/ AN INVITATION

AN INVITATION TO THE PRESIDENT FROM HER MAJESTY TO VISIT THE UK HAD BEEN CONVEYED TWO MONTHS AGO (I HAD IN FACT SPOKEN TO HIM ON 8 DECEMBER AND FOLLOWED THIS UP WITH A LETTER THE SAME DAY, WHICH, HAVING REFERRED TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S INVITATION OF 27 FEBRUARY, STATED THAT QUOTE HER MAJESTY WOULD LIKE TO INVITE THE PRESIDENT TO STAY AT WINDSOR CASTLE UNQUOTE AND THEN PROCEEDED TO SUGGEST VARIOUS DATES IN THE SPRING AND EARLY SUMMER). SINCE THEN HE AND I HAD MANY DISCUSSIONS ON THE SUBJECT AND I HAD SPOKEN ABOUT IT WITH JUDGE CLARK AND AMBASSADOR STOESSEL. MORE RECENTLY WE HAD HAD DETAILED TALKS ABOUT IT AND WORKED OUT A POSSIBLE PROGRAMME. IT WOULD GO DOWN EXTREMELY BADLY, I TOLD DEEVER, IF WE WERE NOW TOLD THAT THE PRESIDENT COULD NOT GO TO LONDON.

5. DEEVER ASKED ME TO GIVE HIM A LITTLE TIME, SAYING THAT HE PROMISED TO SEE WHAT HE COULD DO ABOUT IT.

6. I THEN TELEPHONED HAIG AS SOON AS I COULD AND SPOKE ALONG THE SAME SORT OF LINES. HE SAID THAT THE TROUBLE WAS THAT THE SUBJECT HAD BEEN TAKEN UP WITH DEEVER INSTEAD OF WITH HIM. I INTERJECTED THAT THIS WAS NOT TRUE. I HAD SENT HIM A LETTER ON 26 JANUARY EXTENDING HER MAJESTY'S INVITATION TO THE PRESIDENT TO VISIT THE UK ON 7 AND 8 JUNE. IN THAT LETTER I HAD ADDED THAT I HAD ALREADY DISCUSSED THE SUBJECT WITH JUDGE CLARK. (I HAVE ALSO TALKED ABOUT IT FREQUENTLY WITH STOESSEL AND EAGLEBURGER). HAIG THEN SAID THAT HE WAS SORRY THAT IT HAD ALL GOT SNARLED UP BUT I WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THERE WAS ALSO THE GERMAN PROBLEM.

7. I SAID THAT I THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE THE GREATEST MISTAKE IF THE PRESIDENT WAS TO MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT THE UK. HIS VISIT THERE WOULD GET GREAT PUBLICITY IN THE WHOLE OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD. NOT LEAST THE UNITED STATES. I REALLY DID NOT THINK THAT CRYING OFF AT THIS STATE WOULD BE UNDERSTOOD IN LONDON.

8. HAIG SAID THAT HE MUST GIVE IT FURTHER THOUGHT. HE RANG ME BACK A FEW MINUTES LATER TO ASK ME WHAT SORT OF PROGRAMME COULD BE ARRANGED. WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE PRESIDENT TO HAVE SOME RELAXATION? WHAT SORT OF OTHER EVENTS WOULD HE UNDERTAKE IN LONDON? I MENTIONED THE IDEA OF RIDING IN WINDSOR PARK WHICH I HAD DISCUSSED WITH THE WHITE HOUSE APPARENTLY WITH THEIR ENTHUSIASM. THERE WAS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ADDRESS TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT AND A DINNER AT WINDSOR OR IN BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

CONFIDENTIAL

9. HAIG ASKED WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO GO BY HELICOPTER FROM WINDSOR CASTLE TO THE CENTRE OF LONDON AND I ASSURED HIM THAT IT WOULD. I EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANT TELEVISION POSSIBILITIES AND THE WIDE AUDIENCE THAT WOULD BE REACHED; ALSO THE GREAT UNDERSTANDING WE HAD FOR THE PRESIDENT'S WISH FOR RELAXATION. I WAS SURE THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO COMBINE A VISIT THAT WOULD PROVIDE THE NECESSARY REST AND ALSO GIVE HIM THE PUBLIC OPPORTUNITIES REQUIRED.

10. HAIG SAID THAT ALL THAT WAS MOST INTERESTING. HE THOUGHT THAT SUCH A PROGRAMME QUOTE SOUNDS FINE UNQUOTE. WE WOULD HAVE TO HELP HIM WITH THE GERMANS BUT PERHAPS THAT WAS NOT SO BAD AFTER ALL AS SCHMIDT HAD RECENTLY BEEN ON A QUOTE SPECIAL UNQUOTE TO WASHINGTON. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD GET BACK TO ME. HE THOUGHT THAT HE COULD WORK IT OUT.

11. SO THAT IS WHERE WE STAND AT PRESENT. IT MUST ALL BE VERY CONFUSING TO YOU IN LONDON, NOT TO SAY UNSATISFACTORY. BUT I THINK WE MAY RESCUE THE VISIT. I DO NOT THINK THERE IS ANYTHING MORE TO BE DONE ON OUR SIDE JUST AT THE MOMENT. BUT I EXPECT TO HEAR FROM THEM AGAIN TOMORROW MORNING AND HOPE THAT THEIR MINDS WILL NOT HAVE CHANGED AGAIN. IT IS POSSIBLE THEY MAY AGREE AMONG THEMSELVES.

HENDERSON

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M Wright
M Gilling

COPIES TO:

MR D J WRIGHT, CABINET OFFICE

- 3 -

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