



House of Lords

September

11th October, 1980

CONFIDENTIAL

New Prime Minister,

During your visit to Greece, would you please raise with the Greek Prime Minister the question of members of Nea Demokratia (ND) joining our European Democratic Group in the European Parliament? Of the 24 Greek members to be delegated from the national Parliament until their elections take place in 1981, 14 will be members of the ND, and there is a good chance of having them in our Group.

All the Centre Parties are speculating on the chances of the NDs joining them. Both the Gaullists and the Christian Democrats are particularly keen that the NDs will choose them. Alternatively they could sit as Independents or try and get one other M.E.P. to sit with them to form a Group on their own.

The background of our Party relations with them is as follows:

1. On joining the Council of Europe, ND members joined our 'Independent' Group, and not the Christian Democrats or Gaullists.
2. They are observers of EDU, and accept the principles of our Parties set out in the 'Klesheim' declaration. They have not attended the two recent meetings of EDU, because, I was told, of the presence of a Turk and because of the 'bad image' of Strauss in Greece. The PASOK always raise his contact with the 'Colonels' ' regime.
- 3e We had established what were termed 'close but informal relations' with ND when I went out to Greece with Geoffrey Rippon and Nicholas Bethell in July 1978.

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4. Jim Scott Hopkins and I went to Athens in July to test the water and it was clear that no decisions had been taken concerning the Group they would join in the European Parliament but they were certainly interested in our Group. We saw Mr. Rallis, as well as other ministers (Stephanopoulos, Boutos, Kontogeorgis) and it was agreed with the Prime Minister that two members of ND would attend our next Bureau meeting.

5. We held this Bureau meeting on Monday, 8th September, in Athens and two MPs attended (Gontikas and Frangos) who already work with us, the first in the North Atlantic Assembly and the other in the Council of Europe. At the dinner Jim gave that evening, attended by Stephanopoulos, Kontogeorgis, Strategis (from the Ministry of Coordination) and the head of their International Office (Mr. Louys), the existence of close relations between our Parties was confirmed, and it was agreed that ND members will be invited and attend our future meetings, study days, etc.

From this you will see that we stand a good chance of having the 14 ND members with us, which would considerably strengthen our position in the Parliament and I believe would be of great benefit to us and to them. It was indicated that Mr. Rallis will expect to discuss this matter with you during your visit. Jim or I could fill you in with further details should you wish it.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Peter Carrington, to Peter Thorneycroft and to Jim.

With all best wishes

Love

Jim

The Rt.Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
Prime Minister,
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