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CRAXI'S VISIT TO LONDON: FEBRUARY 14.

SUMMARY.

1. ITALIAN POLITICS WILL BE DOMINATED FOR THE NEXT FOUR MONTHS BY LOCAL AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. CRAXI WANTS TO KEEP CLEAR OF DETAIL ON EC MATTERS, AND HIS OBJECTIVES FOR THE ITALIAN PRESIDENCY REMAIN VAGUE. ALTHOUGH CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO SOLVE IMMEDIATE ISSUES, HE WILL PREFER TO TAKE REFUGE IN EUROPEAN UNION.

DETAIL.

2. CRAXI'S WORKING VISIT TO LONDON ON 14 FEBRUARY IS PART OF A BUSY PROGRAMME OF OVERSEAS VISITS DURING THE NEXT MONTH. HE IS PAYING BRIEF WORKING VISITS TO LISBON AND MADRID ON 15 FEBRUARY AND PARIS AND BONN ON 22 FEBRUARY, WILL ATTEND THE URUGUAYAN PRESIDENT'S INAUGURATION IN MONTVIDEO FROM 28 FEBRUARY TO 2 MARCH, AND PAY SUBSTANTIAL VISIT TO NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON ON 3-7 MARCH. CRAXI'S WASHINGTON VISIT AND HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN ON 5 MARCH WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR HIM, PARTLY TO BALANCE THOSE MADE RECENTLY BY THE HEADS OF THE DC AND REPUBLICAN PARTIES, AND PARTLY BECAUSE CRAXI NEEDS TO PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION TO HIS DOMESTIC IMAGE IN THE COMING WEEKS. ITALY HAS NOW ENTERED A PERIOD OF INCREASED DOMESTIC POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN PREPARATION FOR THE IMPORTANT LOCAL ELECTIONS ON 12 MAY AND FOR THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, A PROCESS OF UNKNOWN LENGTH WHICH BEGINS ON 7 JUNE. THE LOCAL ELECTIONS WILL BE AN IMPORTANT TEST OF THE RELATIVE STRENGTHS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES. THEY AND THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WILL DETERMINE HOW LONG THE CRAXI GOVERNMENT WILL SURVIVE THEREAFTER.

3. CRAXI HAS NOT SO FAR DEVOTED MUCH OF HIS TIME TO THE ITALIAN PRESIDENCY. HE DISLIKES THE DETAIL OF EC AFFAIRS AND HIS CERTAIN TO LEAVE THE NEGOTIATIONS TO ANDREOTTI. THIS WILL BE HIS FIRST VISIT OVERSEAS IN HIS PRESIDENCY CAPACITY. HIS VISITS TO LONDON, MADRID, LISBON, PARIS AND BONN ARE PUBLIC RELATIONS EXERCISE DESIGNED TO SHOW ITALY'S COMMITMENT TO PROGRESS ON THE DIFFICULT EC ISSUES. THEY DO NOT, IN CRAXI'S EYES, CONSTITUTE A NEGOTIATING ROUND.

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4. THE ENLARGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS AND THE UNRESOLVED 1985 EC BUDGET ARE UPPERMOST AMONG THE ITALIAN PRESIDENCY'S PREOCCUPATIONS. CRAXII PROBABLY HAS HIS MIND ON THE WIDER HORIZONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, BUT HIS OFFICIALS WILL HAVE REMINDED HIM OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MORE IMMEDIATE ISSUES. THIS MAY INCLUDE AN ATTEMPT TO GET US TO OFFER MORE ON HMPS TO HELP UNBLOCK THE GREEK VETO ON ENLARGEMENT. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT CRAXII WANTS TO BE THE STATESMAN WHO RELAUNCHED THE COMMUNITY. BUT HE IS NOT A WILD FEDERALIST AND HE KNOWS HE HAS TO DEAL WITH ENLARGEMENT FIRST. THE LONDON MEETING IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PUT OUR VIEWS OVER FRANKLY TO HIM, WITHOUT EXPECTING TOO MUCH IMMEDIATELY IN RETURN.

5. FOR CRAXII'S OBJECTIVES IN LONDO AS REPORTED BY HIS STAFF SEE MY TELNO 133.

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