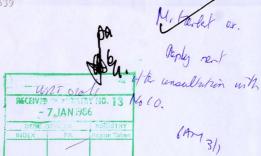
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TELELETTER NFR
OF 301600Z DECEMBER 85



FOLLOWING FOR D J M DAIN ESQ, WED, FCO

NFR DATED 30 DECEMBER 1985

FROM T L RICHARDSON, ROME.

ANGLO/ITALIAN SUMMIT.

- 1. AS I EXPLAINED TO HERBERT BEFORE CHRISTMAS, IT WILL NOT (NOT) BE POSSIBLE TO TAKE ACTION WITH CRAXI'S DIPLOMATIC OFFICE UNTIL THE NEW YEAR ON THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT ANGLO/ITALIAN SUMMIT. WE SHALL DO SO THEN BUT MEANWHILE I SHOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON THE PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE ARRANGEMENTS SET OUT IN POWELL'S LETTER TO APPLEYARD OF 19 DECEMBER, A COPY OF WHICH I HAVE JUST SEEN. I HAVE DISCUSSED WHAT FOLLOWS WITH THE AMBASSADOR, WHO RETURNS FROM LOCAL LEAVE ON 2 JANUARY.
- 2. TO CONFINE A SUMMIT IN ITALY TO A SINGLE DAY WILL REQUIRE A VERY TIGHT PROGRAMME AND AN EARLY START FROM LONDON, AND I AM NOT SURE THAT THE FRENCH AND GERMAN PRECEDENTS WHICH POWELL MENTIONS ARE VALID GIVEN THE MUCH LONGER TRAVELLING TIME REQUIRED IN BOTH DIRECTIONS, WHETHER TO FLORENCE OR ROME. A POSSIBLE PROGRAMME MIGHT BE:-

0700: PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY LEAVES LONDON

1030 LOCAL TIME: ARRIVAL IN ITALY.

1130: TALKS BEGIN (PRIME MINISTER WITH CRAXIT, OTHER MINISTERS WITH THEIR ITALIAN COLLEAGUES).

1330-1500: LUNCH (BUT SEE BELOW)

1600-1800: FURTHER TALKS, INCLUDING PLENARY SESSION.

1815-1845: PRESS CONFERENCE.

1900: PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY LEAVES FOR AIRPORT.

2000: TAKE-OFF, ARRIVING IN LONDON 2130.

- 3. THE ITALIANS WILL FIND THESE ARRANGEMENTS INCONVENIENT. THE

 MORNING SESSION WILL BE CROWDED IF PRIME MINISTERS AND FOREIGN

 MINISTERS ARE TO HAVE SEPARATE TETE A TETES BEFORE JOINING

 ACH OTHER FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION. THE LUNCH COULD WELL START LATE,

 OR DRAG ON (WHICH IS WHY I HAVE ALLOWED AN EXTRA HOUR BEFORE TALKS

 RESUME IN THE AFTERNOON), AND IN OUR EXPERIENCE ITALIAN MINISTERS

 SELDOM WANT TO MAKE THEMSELVES AVAILABLE FOR BUSINESS IN THE

 EARLY AFTERNOON, PREFERRING EVENING DISCUSSIONS BEFORE

 DINNER. I ASSUME THAT WE SHALL HAVE TO RESIST AN ITALIAN OFFER OF

 DINNER FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY, SINCE IT WOULD THEN BE

 UNLIKELY TO ARRIVE IN HEATHROW MUCH BEFORE MIDNIGHT. IF THE

 SUMMIT WERE HELD IN ROME, THE PARTY MIGHT WELL HAVE NO TIME TO

 STOP OFF AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, AND PRIVATE OFFICE AND

 PRESS FACILITIES WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE BASED ON THIS EMBASSY.
 - 4. ABOVE ALL, THERE IS THE POLITICAL POINT THAT THIS WILL BE
 THE FIRST ANGLO/ITALIAN SUMMIT FOR OVER A YEAR: THE LAST ONE TOOK
 PLACE IN LONDON ON FEBRUARY 13-14. THE ITALIANS WERE DISAPPOINTED
 AT OUR POSTPONEMENT OF THE SUMMIT ORIGINALLY FIXED FOR OCTOBER.
 IN THEORY, THESE SUMMITS ARE SUPPOSED TO TAKE PLACE VERY SIX
 MONTHS: IN PRACTICE, AN INTERVAL OF NINE MONTHS HAS BEEN
 THE RECENT NORM. ON THIS OCCASION THIRTEEN MONTHS WILL HAVE
 ELAPSED SINCE THE LAST SUMMIT. WE DO NOT WANT TO GIVE THE
 ITALIANS THE IMPRESSION THAT THESE SUMMITS HAVE BECOME AN
 UNWELCOME CHORE.
 - 5. BEFORE WE SPEAK TO CHIGI OFFICIALS, THEREFORE, COULD YOU ASCERTAIN FROM NO. 10 WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER'S DECISION IS IMMUTABLE?. I AM SURE THAT THE ITALIANS WILL THEMSELVES ASK US WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY COULD NOT ARRIVE ON THE EVENING OF 11 MARCH, IN WHICH CASE IT COULD CERTAINLY LEAVE ITALY IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON OF THE FOLLOWING DAY. LITTE OR NO WORKING TIME WOULD BE LOST THEREBY, AND THE PROGRAMME WOULD BE FAR MORE RESTFUL.
 - 6. I HAVE NOT DISCUSSED THE QUESTION OF FLORENCE VERUS ROME. WE SHALL SEND OUR ADVICE AFTER WE HAVE CONSULTED THE CHIGI AND HMC FLORENCE. THE TIMING WILL BE TIGHT WHICHEVER VENUE WE CHOOSE.

SIGNED: T L RICHARDSON