

Australia

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TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 396 OF 14 SEPTEMBER

INFO UKMIS NEW YORK AND WELLINGTON

AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

1. MR TONY STREET LUNCHEd ALONE WITH ME AT HOME ON 14 SEPTEMBER, SO THAT WE COULD GO OVER THE GROUND BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE IN TWO DAYS TIME FOR THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND HIS SUBSEQUENT IMMERSION IN CHOGM. THE FOLLOWING WERE THE MAIN POINTS BROUGHT OUT IN CONVERSATION.

2. UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

AT THE UN MR STREET HOPES TO HAVE TALKS WITH YOURSELF, MR HAIG, AND THE POLES 'WHOM I HAVE NEVER MET'. HIS SPEECH TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WILL NOT FOLLOW THE NORMAL AUSTRALIAN PATTERN. HE SAID THAT SUCH SPEECHES WERE USUALLY A ROUND UP OF AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN POLICY ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST YEAR, CONVENTIONS SIGNED, AGREEMENTS REACHED, ETC. TO THE DISMAY OF HIS OFFICIALS, MR STREET INTENDED TO HAVE A SINGLE THEME SPEECH, NORTH/SOUTH, BUT A THEME WITH A DIFFERENCE. HE INTENDED FIRST TO EXTOL, OR RATHER EXPLAIN, AUSTRALIA'S POTENTIAL ROLE AS A BRIDGE BUILDER BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH. HE WOULD THEN GO ON TO RECALL THAT AUSTRALIA HAD ORIGINALLY TRIED TO HELP THE THIRD WORLD BY GIVING AID. THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAD NOW CONCLUDED THAT THE WAY AHEAD LAY RATHER IN DEFEATING INFLATION AT HOME, SO THAT THERE WOULD BE MORE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO AID DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: THE LATTER COULD NOT BE HELPED BY THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES UNLESS THE DEVELOPED ECONOMIES WERE HEALTHY.

3. I ASKED HOW THIS LINE HAD GONE DOWN WITH HIS OWN PRIME MINISTER. MR STREET SAID THAT HE HAD PERFORCE ACCEPTED MR FRASER'S PREOCCUPATION WITH THE NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE, BUT HIMSELF FOUND DIFFICULTIES IN IT. IN HIS AID SPEECH IN THE BUDGET DEBATE HE HAD DECLINED TO MENTION 0.7 PER CENT AS A REALISTIC TARGET FOR AUSTRALIA AND HAD WITH DIFFICULTY OBTAINED THE PRIME MINISTER'S AGREEMENT TO THIS. HE THOUGHT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WAS BECOMING MORE REALISTIC. HE HIMSELF HAD NO DOUBT THAT THE AUSTRALIAN ELECTORATE WERE UNPREPARED TO ACCEPT HEAVY SACRIFICES TO HELP THE DEVELOPING WORLD.

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/4. HUNGER STRIKERS

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MR STREET HAD BEEN PLEASED, AND RELIEVED, TO LEARN OF THE IRA'S APPEAL TO THE SYDNEY HUNGER STRIKER, O'CONNOR, TO GIVE UP HIS STRIKE. I RECOUNTED TO HIM THE GIST OF YOUR TELEGRAM NO 338, AND SAID THAT HIS OFFICIALS HAD ADVISED AGAINST MY WRITING TO CARDINAL FREEMAN. I SAID THAT I ACCEPTED THIS ADVICE. I TOLD MR STREET OF MR ALISON'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO CANBERRA (MY TELEGRAM NO 387) AND HE SUGGESTED, AND I AGREED, THAT I SHOULD ASK THE MINISTER WHO WILL BE DEPUTISING FOR HIM, BUT WHOSE NAME HAS NOT YET BEEN DECIDED, TO MY DINNER PARTY FOR MR ALISON ON 23 SEPTEMBER. I AGREED.

5. CHOGM. MR STREET EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDABLE FOREBODINGS AND NERVOUSNESS ABOUT THE COURSE WHICH THE CONFERENCE MIGHT TAKE.

APART FROM THE OPEN ENDED POSSIBILITY FOR DISAGREEMENTS IN ALMOST EVERY SPHERE, THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT MOST FEARED THE JOKER, MR MULDOON. IF HE DECIDED TO RUN HIS HUMAN RIGHTS THEME, THEN NOBODY WOULD BE ABLE TO STOP HIM, AND THE CONFERENCE WOULD BE IN DISARRAY. HE HAD NEARLY WRECKED THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM IN VANUATU WHEN, AFTER A COMPROMISE AGREEMENT HAD PAINSTAKINGLY BEEN REACHED ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE FUTURE OF NEW CALEDONIA, HE HAD SAID IN FULL CONFERENCE THAT IF THAT WAS THE WAY THINGS WERE GOING TO GO HE DID NOT SEE MUCH POINT IN COMING TO THE CONFERENCE AGAIN.

6. ON NORTH/SOUTH MATTERS, MR STREET AGAIN MADE PERFECTLY, BUT PROVATELY, CLEAR THAT HE DID NOT SHARE HIS PRIME MINISTER'S VIEWS. SEEKING MY PARDON FOR SPEAKING SO DIRECTLY, HE ASKED WHETHER I SAW ANY POINT IN A MELBOURNE DECLARATION. I SAID THAT I DID NOT, AND WAS CONFIDENT THAT YOU WOULD SHARE MY VIEW. HE SAID THAT HE ENTIRELY AGREED, BUT FEARED THAT THE COMMITMENT TO PRODUCE ONE HAD NOW GONE TOO FAR. I SAID THAT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THE MELBOURNE DECLARATION WOULD NOT CAUSE US CRUCIAL DIFFICULTY UNLESS IT WENT TOO FAR, FROM ITS PRESENT DRAFT, TOWARDS THE GROUP OF 77 MEMBERS OF CHOGM. OTHERWISE, WE HOPED TO BE ABLE TO GO ALONG WITH THE AUSTRALIANS. BEARING IN MIND, BUT NOT OF COURSE REFERRING TO, YOUR TELS NOS 332 AND 333, I SAID THAT I THOUGHT THAT OWEN HARRIES HAD CONSIDERABLY MODIFIED HIS VIEWS SINCE HIS VISIT TO ENGLAND, AND THAT THE FINAL DRAFT MIGHT SHOW SIGNS OF THIS MODIFICATION. MR STREET AGREED, SAYING THAT HARRIES' DRAFT OF MR FRASER'S OPENING STATEMENT AT CHOGM WERE EXACTLY WHAT HE WOULD HAVE WISHED.

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7. I CONGRATULATED MR STREET ON THE SPLENDID WORK OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHOGM TASK FORCE. HE WAS CLEARLY PLEASED, AND PERHAPS A LITTLE SURPRISED, TO HEAR THIS, AND ASKED MY PERMISSION, WHICH I NATURALLY GAVE, TO PASS ON MY CONGRATULATIONS TO THOSE CONCERNED.

8. MR FRASER'S HEALTH. IN REPLY TO MY QUESTION, MR STREET SAID THAT MR FRASER WAS ALARMINGLY FIT. HIS COLLEAGUES HAD REFUSED TO SEND HIM, DURING HIS REST, ANYTHING OTHER BUT CHOGM PAPERS. THE CONSEQUENCE WAS THAT HE HAD BEEN RINGING UP MINISTERS AND SENIOR PUBLIC SERVANTS THREE TIMES A DAY, ASKING TO KNOW WHAT THIS OR THAT POINT MEANT. MR STREET SAID I COULD BE SURE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD NEVER GONE THROUGH ANY PAPERS AS CLOSELY AS HE HAD NOW GONE THROUGH THOSE PERTAINING TO CHOGM.

9. FINALLY, MR STREET ASKED WHETHER THERE WERE ANY POINTS WHICH I WOULD LIKE TO BRING TO HIS ATTENTION ON YOUR BEHALF. I SAID THAT I THOUGHT THAT THERE WERE NOT. WE SEEMED TO BE MARCHING EXCELLENTLY IN UNISON. I THOUGHT THAT WE BOTH MIGHT COME IN FOR SOME FLAK, BUT THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM WAS ON THE WHOLE UNLIKELY TO COME IN FOR ANY IN WHICH AUSTRALIA DID NOT SHARE.

MASON

[THIS TELEGRAM WAS NOT ADVANCED]

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