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FM PARIS

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 795

OF 241703Z SEPTEMBER

INFO PRIORITY WELLINGTON, CANBERRA, UKMIS NEW YORK

INFO ROUTINE SUVA, VILA

INFO SAVING WASHINGTON, THE HAGUE, BERNE

MY TELNO 786: GREENPEACE

SUMMARY

1. FABIOUS IS NOW SQUARELY IN THE FIRING LINE WITH ALLEGATIONS THAT HE KNEW ALL IN MID-JULY. FURTHER MYSTERY IS CREATED BY THE ALLEGED DISAPPEARANCE OF KEY DOCUMENTS FROM DGSE FILES. NEWS DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT YESTERDAY IS SEEN AS HOSTILE TO FRANCE: 'PERFIDIOUS ALBION'.

DETAIL

2. EUROPE 1 PRIVATE RADIO, QUOTING SOURCES CLOSE THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, HAS CLAIMED THAT FABIOUS WAS TOLD THE TRUTH OF THE AFFAIR IN MID-JULY BUT JUDGED THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO COME CLEAN AND REFUSED TO OPEN A NEGOTIATION WITH THE NEW ZEALANDERS, AS PROPOSED BY LACOSTE (THEN HEAD OF THE DGSE). THE SAME SOURCES WARNED THAT LACOSTE MIGHT NOW REVEAL WHO HAD GIVEN HIM THE ORDERS FOR THE OPERATION. THESE ALLEGATIONS HAVE BEEN HOTLY DENIED BY FABIOUS' STAFF BUT THEY HAVE SERVED TO MAKE HIM PERSONALLY A MORE ATTRACTIVE TARGET. LE FIGARO PARTICULARLY CONCENTRATES ITS FIRE ON HIM AND CLAIMS THAT EVEN MANY SOCIALISTS WOULD BE GLAD TO GET RID OF HIM. BUT THERE IS MORE THAN ONE HINT THAT THE ATTACK ON FABIOUS, IF SUCCESSFUL, WOULD LEAD INEVITABLY TO AN ATTACK ON THE PRESIDENT, FOR IF FABIOUS ENGAGED IN A COVER-UP, MITTERRAND MUST SURELY HAVE DONE SO TOO. AND LE MONDE THIS AFTERNOON SUGGESTS THAT THERE IS IN FACT LESS REASON TO SUSPECT FABIOUS THAN MITTERRAND, SINCE THE ELYSEE (THROUGH SAULNIER) APPROVED THE OPERATION'S EXPENSES AND FABIOUS IS SAID BY OTHER SOURCES TO HAVE BEEN CALLING SINCE EARLY AUGUST FOR HERNU'S RESIGNATION. LE MONDE SUGGEST THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW LIKELY TO TAKE THE LINE THAT THE OPERATION WAS INDEED ORDERED BY HERNU AND NOT MERELY BY THE MILITARY, BUT THAT FABIOUS AND MITTERRAND WERE NOT INFORMED. THE EDITOR OF LIBERATION TODAY PRESENTS THE SITUATION AS A RACE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DGSE TO SHOW THAT IT WAS THE OTHER WHO ORDERED THE ATTACK ON THE RAINBOW WARRIOR, AND SUGGESTS THAT IT MAY AGAIN BE THE PRESS WHICH HAS THE DECISIVE ROLE IN REVEALING MORE OF THE TRUTH. AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY QUILES IS EXPECTED IN THE NEXT DAY OR SO.

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3. THE OTHER NEW STORY OF THE DAY IS THE REPORTED DISAPPEARANCE OF KEY FINANCIAL RECORDS FROM DGSE FILES. ACCORDING TO ONE ARTICLE THE DGSE REMOVED FROM THE DOSSIER ALL REFERENCE TO THE THIRD TEAM OF DIVERS. THERE IS INEVITABLY SPECULATION THAT THESE PAPERS WOULD REVEAL WHO GAVE THE ORDERS FOR THEIR MISSION. QUILES HAS ORDERED THAT THE FILES BE RECONSTITUTED BUT IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW ANYONE WILL BE ABLE TO BE SURE THAT THIS IS DONE ACCURATELY. NOR INDEED IS IT CLEAR THAT THESE 'FILES' EVER EXISTED IN COHERENT FORM AT LEAST.

4. SOME NEWSPAPERS REPORTED THE FCO SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT YESTERDAY. LIBERATION LINKS IT WITH CONSIDERATION OF ACTION BY THE NETHERLANDS (OVER THE MURDERED PHOTOGRAPHER) AND SWITZERLAND (OVER THE TURENGES PASSPORTS). IT SAYS THAT PERFIDIOUS ALBION, SO LONG THE VICTIM OF ATTEMPTS TO INVOLVE IT IN THE AFFAIR, IS NOW ATTACKING FRANCE OPENLY. LE MATIN (PRO-GOVERNMENT) COMMENTS THAT MRS THATCHER MIGHT FIND SATISFACTION IN THE GREENPEACE AFFAIR BECAUSE SHE DOES NOT GET ON WITH MITTERRAND AND WANTS TO REDUCE FRENCH INFLUENCE IN THE PACIFIC: EVEN SO, IN PRINCIPLE SHE WOULD PREFER FRANCE TO BE STRATEGICALLY STRONG.

5. THE FRENCH SEEM AT LAST TO BE MOVING TO PATCH UP THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE NEW ZEALANDERS, PARTLY IN THE HOPE OF SECURING THE RELEASE OF THE TURENGE COUPLE. A FIRST MEETING TOOK PLACE YESTERDAY IN NEW YORK BETWEEN DUMAS AND PALMER (NZ VICE PM), AND ANOTHER IS TO FOLLOW SOON, FABIOUS HAS ALSO HAD AN ORAL APOLOGY PASSED TO LANGE BY THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR IN NEW ZEALAND. LE MONDE SUPPORTS THIS PROCESS AND SUGGESTS A PRESIDENTIAL EMISSARY TO LANGE. BUT THE TWO SIDES REMAIN FAR APART. THE NEW ZEALANDERS WOULD HAVE OBVIOUS LEGAL DIFFICULTIES OVER CLEMENCY FOR THE TURENGES, AND THERE IS NO SIGN THAT MITTERRAND HAS YET CALMED HIS ANGER OVER LANGE'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

#### POLITICAL ASPECTS

6. THE OPPOSITION ARE CRITICAL OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY PROPOSED BY FABIOUS THEY POINT OUT RIGHTLY THAT IT WILL BE SLOW AND CUMBERSOME, AND WILL HAVE ONLY LIMITED ACCESS TO THE EVIDENCE. MOREOVER, IN PRIVATE, SOME OPPOSITION POLITICIANS REPROACH THE GOVERNMENT MORE FOR INEFFICIENCY IN CONCEALING THE TRUTH THAN ON ANY MORAL GROUNDS. THEY (MISLEADINGLY) QUOTE WITH APPROVAL THE BRITISH REFUSAL TO COMMENT PUBLICLY ON MATTERS INVOLVING THE SECURITY SERVICES, AND REGARD FABIOUS' AVOWAL OF FRENCH RESPONSIBILITY AS ALMOST TANTAMOUNT TO TREASON. THE SOCIALIST ARE DIVIDED. ALTHOUGH MANY SOCIALISTS SEEM TO FEEL THAT IN SACRIFICING HERNU THEY HAVE DONE MORE THAN ENOUGH TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY, THEY ARE NOT SURE THAT HIS RESIGNATION WILL IN FACT BE ENOUGH TO HOLD THE LINE AND THERE ARE EVEN HINTS THAT OLD SCORES COULD BE SETTLED.

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COMMENT

7. THE RIVALRIES AND TENSIONS WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION, PARTICULARLY BETWEEN SOCIALIST MINISTERS AND THE MILITARY, COULD WELL LEAD TO FURTHER REVELATIONS THROUGH THE PRESS. REPORTS THAT TWO DGSE OFFICERS HAVE BEEN DETAINED FOR PRESS LEAKS, SEEMS SYMPTOMATIC OF THE ATMOSPHERE. EACH TIME THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN FORCED TO MAKE AN ADMISSION IN PUBLIC, IT HAS COME UNDER MEDIA PRESSURE TO GO FURTHER AND ANSWER YET MORE QUESTIONS. THIS PROCESS HAS ECHOES OF THE WATERGATE AFFAIR, EVEN IF IN FRANCE THE GOVERNMENT MAY STAND MORE CHANCE OF SURVIVING DAMAGING POLITICAL SCANDALS THAN IN MOST OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES. NEVERTHELESS, THE PRESSURES ON FABIOS AND MITTERRAND ARE MOUNTING. AS THEY BATTLE TO WITHSTAND THEM, THEY WILL BE INORDINATELY SENSITIVE TO PUBLIC COMMENT BY OTHER COUNTRIES.  
FCO PLEASE PASS SAVINGS

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