

CONFIDENTIAL



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1. cc. Col. ...  
PUS D(2)  
NEXRAD.  
WED.  
2. Mr. ...  
Mr Ashton  
3. PA Malta France  
cc as at 1 and  
to Malta/FCC  
to Malta/Italy

A L S Coltman Esq  
Southern European Department  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Your reference  
Our reference 21/1  
Date 12 April 1979

LRJ 2111

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DESK O

Dear Mr. ...

Mr. Verckar  
Mr. ...  
Mr. ...  
20/4

MALTA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

1. At a routine lunch for the No.2's in the United States and EEC Missions to-day we all expressed our uncertainty over Mr Mintoff's next moves. We recognised that he had not made his expected announcement on Malta's future foreign relations on or about 31 March because he was not in a position to provide any figures or other firm evidence of support either from the Libyans or the Europeans. Mr Mintoff has not yet responded to the demarche made by the French, Italians and Germans on 29 March whereby those countries declared their readiness to hold talks in Malta at high official level as soon as the Malta Government wished. One would not expect any response yet. Nevertheless my French colleague to the evident surprise of his Italian and German colleagues said that if there was no response soon the French Ambassador would put the French proposals - a very soft loan and technical co-operation - directly to the Malta Government. I said I assumed that in this event the French Ambassador would be acting on behalf of the Italians and also the Germans who would take part as observers according to the agreed arrangements. He confirmed that this would be the case but the Italian and German representatives remained silent.

2. I suggested that Mr Mintoff was himself in a quandary after his talks with Qadhafi on 31 March and 1 April and was probably still hoping to obtain marketable evidence of Arab support before returning to the Europeans and that if the French and their partners jumped in again too quickly Mintoff would take this as a sign of eagerness and exploit it. This I think is probably true, but on the other hand if as we understand Mintoff is unhappy about the uncertainties of his foreign relations some advantage might be derived through the Europeans making firm proposals before long.

3. A further point which emerged was that the Libyan Ambassador before going off to Rome a few days ago had told the new American Ambassador that he understood Mr Mintoff had not been pleased with the results of his talks with Colonel Qadhafi on 31 March and 1 April. He did not indicate the Libyan attitude to these talks but said that further bilateral talks between the Maltese and the Libyans would take place at a date and level yet to be decided.

Yours ever  
Michael  
R M Purcell

c.c. Chanceries at:  
Paris