

WSHFO 8/18
DD F C O 180600Z



ADVANCE COPY

DD BONN 180800Z

IMMEDIATE

GRS 450
RESTRICTED
DESKBY 180600Z F C O
DESKBY 180800Z BONN
FM WASHINGTON 180015Z JAN 85
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 155 DATED 17 JANUARY
AND TO IMMEDIATE BONN

* D/B 180600Z
MR POWELL NOTED ST
HDS ECD(E)
MAED.
NAD.
W Derek Thomas
TYPISTS

FOLLOWING FOR POWELL AND THOMAS (PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY)
TELECON THOMAS/KERR: ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS AND AUTOMOBILES.

1. THE EPA HAVE NOT ISSUED ANY RECENT NEW REPORTS ON THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH CATALYTIC CONVERTERS. BUT THEY MAINTAIN THAT BOTH PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY HAVE STEADILY IMPROVED, AND THAT THE LATEST VERSIONS LAST THE CAR'S LIFETIME, IF IT IS WELL MAINTAINED AND DRIVEN.

2. EPA STUDIES HOWEVER SHOW THAT PERCENTAGE EFFICIENCY FALLS FROM THE 90'S AT FIRST TO THE 80'S OVER THE FIRST 25,000 MILES, AND TO AROUND 50 AFTER 100,000 MILES. IN ADDITION FAILURES CAN OCCUR THROUGH MISFUELING WITH LEADED PETROL, AND TAMPERING/REMOVAL. OVERHEATING CAN RESULT IN CATALYTIC MELTDOWN: THE EPA MAINTAIN THAT THIS IS A MINOR CAUSE OF FAILURE, BUT THEIR INFORMATION RELATES TO US DRIVING PATTERNS, AND SPEEDS HERE ARE OF COURSE LOWER THAN IN EUROPE, WHERE CATALYTIC CONVERTERS WOULD THEREFORE BE MORE SEVERELY TESTED.

3. ON THE WIDER ISSUE OF THE EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT OF PASSENGER VEHICLE POLLUTION CONTROLS, EPA WAX LYRICAL: THEY SEE THEM AS THE GREATEST SUCCESS OF THE CLEAN AIR ACT. IN CITIES, THERE HAS BEEN A 90 PERCENT REDUCTION IN HYDROCARBON, CARBON MONOXIDE, AND NOX FROM VEHICLES, WHICH REPRESENTS THE LARGEST SINGLE CONTRIBUTION TO AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT. MOST PROGRESS HAS BEEN ON NOX, WITH PROGRESS ON OZONE SIGNIFICANT BUT LESS MARKED. LEAD-FREE PETROL HAS ALSO DRASTICALLY REDUCED LEAD EMISSIONS, AND HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH REDUCTIONS IN BLOOD LEAD CONCENTRATIONS AMONG CITY POPULATIONS.

4. OUT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, THE EFFECTS ARE NO DOUBT MUCH LESS MARKED. ALL ONE CAN SAY WITH CERTAINTY IS THAT THE US RECORD OF EMISSION CONTROLS IS MUCH BETTER IN RESPECT OF VEHICLES THAN STATIONARY SOURCES: AND THAT, SO FAR AS FOREST DAMAGE IS CONCERNED, RECENT US RESEARCH IMPLICATES NOT ONLY OZONE, BUT ALSO NOX, THE FERTILING EFFECT OF THE LATTER CAUSING NEW GROWTH WHICH IS MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO FROST AND WEATHER DAMAGE.

Same as EC proposals.

5. IT MAY BE RELEVANT TO NOTE THAT THERE IS IN THE US NO REPEAT NO LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT FOR CATALYTIC CONVERTERS IN CARS. THE CLEAN AIR ACT MERELY MANDATES VEHICLE EMISSION STANDARDS. CATALYSTS HAVE, SINCE 1976, BEEN THE AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY'S CHOSEN MEANS OF MEETING THESE STANDARDS. BUT ENGINEERING CONTROLS (EG LEAN BURN) WOULD BE EQUALLY ACCEPTABLE, PROVIDED THE STANDARDS WERE MET.

6. SO CONVERGENCE OF EC AND US PRACTICE WOULD POINT TO EC-WIDE AGREEMENT ON STANDARDS, BUT A "LAISSEZ FAIRE" APPROACH TO METHODS OF MEETING THEM.

7. ADVANCE COPIES TO POWELL (NO 10) PLEASE.

WRIGHT

NNNN