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PAGE 02 OF 04 LONDON 20962 300949Z
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
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~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~ LONDON 20962

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STATE PASS NSC FOR ADMIRAL POINDEXTER FROM
AMBASSADOR PRICE
STATE ALSO PASS SECRETARIES SHULTZ AND WEINBERGER

E. O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PGOV, UK
SUBJECT: BRITISH ELECTIONS

REF: LONDON 20946

1. ~~(C)~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.)
2. JOHN: BY NOW YOU WILL HAVE SEEN MY MESSAGE TO GEORGE SHULTZ ABOUT THE FORTHCOMING BRITISH ELECTION. OUR STAKE IN THE OUTCOME OF THAT ELECTION CANNOT BE OVERSTATED.
3. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE IS TO STRESS TO YOU HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT WASHINGTON TAKE A DISCIPLINED AND SENSITIVE PUBLIC AFFAIRS APPROACH TO THE BRITISH ELECTIONS. WHAT WE DO AND WHAT WE SAY IN THE COMING MONTHS WILL INEVITABLY HAVE AN IMPACT HERE. AND WE ARE DEALING WITH SUCH MARGINS THAT THIS IMPACT COULD DIRECTLY AFFECT THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION. FOR EXAMPLE, THE DECISION TO PUSH THROUGH THE EXTRADITION

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NLRR Feb 07/13 # 32136
BY LOI NARA DATE 8/4/08

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INCOMING

PAGE 03 OF 04 LONDON 20962 300949Z

C09/19 002439 NOD908

TREATY AMENDMENT OR THE DECISION TO REACH AN AGREEMENT ON CDE PLAY VERY POSITIVELY IN BRITAIN. BY CONTRAST, A DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH THE TRANSFER OF SOPHISTICATED MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO ARGENTINA OR A DECISION TO RENEGE ON OUR SDI COMMITMENTS TO THE BRITISH WOULD BE A REAL BLOW.

4. SIMILARLY, WHAT WE SAY IN WASHINGTON REVERBERATES IN THIS COUNTRY AND WILL ECHO RIGHT UP TO THE ELECTION. FOR EXAMPLE, CAP WEINBERGER APPEARED LAST NIGHT ON A BRITISH TELEVISION PROGRAM AND HIS REMARKS WERE RIGHT ON THE MARK. HE EMPHASIZED THE INCONSISTENCIES OF UNILATERALISM AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP. HE DID NOT ATTACK THE LABOR PARTY DIRECTLY. BY CONTRAST, RICHARD PERLE APPEARED ON A DIFFERENT TELEVISION PROGRAM ON SUNDAY. WHILE HIS BASIC MESSAGE WAS THE SAME, RICHARD MADE THE DEFENSE ISSUE SOUND AS IF IT WERE A US-UK MATTER AND HE DIRECTLY ATTACKED THE LABOR PARTY AND ITS LEADER. OF COURSE, THE LABOR PARTY WELCOMES SUCH ATTACKS AND TURNS THEM TO ITS ADVANTAGE. THE PRESS HAS HAD A FIELD DAY. SO, THE NET IMPACT OF CAP'S AND RICHARD'S COMMENTS WAS MIXED IN THE EYES OF JOURNALISTS, POLITICIANS AND VOTERS HERE.

5. I RECALL A YEAR AND A HALF AGO OR SO, WHEN A VARIETY OF ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS WERE MAKING ALL SORTS OF CONTRADICTORY COMMENTS ABOUT SDI, THAT THE NSC PUT OUT A STRONG DIRECTIVE WHICH AUTHORIZED ONLY A SELECT FEW TO COMMENT PUBLICLY ON THE SUBJECT. I ALSO RECOLLECT A SIMILAR ORDER FOR DISCIPLINE IN THE PERIOD RUNNING UP TO LAST YEAR'S NOVEMBER SUMMIT. IT IS NOT TOO EARLY TO DO THE SAME THING FOR THE BRITISH ELECTIONS. I CANNOT EMPHASIZE TOO MUCH THE NEED FOR A

STRICT MECHANISM TO COORDINATE OUR PUBLIC STATEMENTS. WE HAVE ALREADY SENT IN OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE

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PAGE 04 OF 04 LONDON 20962 300949Z C09/19 002439 NOD908
THEMES WHICH WE BELIEVE THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD
ADOPT (SEE REFTEL). THESE THEMES MUST BE REPEATED
AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN WITH RESTRAINT AND
CONSISTENCY. ONE SOUR NOTE SETS BACK THE WHOLE
COMPOSITION.
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