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FM WASHINGTON 130002Z SEP 79

TO PRIORITY F C O

TEL NO 2657 OF 12 SEPTEMBER 1979

INFO SAVING TO ALL EEC POSTS, UKDEL NATO.

*Pamie Amster*

*Ans 13/9*

*Ans*

MY TEL NO 2605: SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY.

1. SENATOR KENNEDY YESTERDAY SAID IN VARIOUS INTERVIEWS THAT (I) HE HAD BEEN QUOTE ASKED TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO CANDIDACY FOR THE PRESIDENCY UNQUOTE BY SEVERAL DEMOCRATIC SENATORS UP FOR RE-ELECTION IN 1980 (AND FEARFUL OF THEIR CHANCES WITH CARTER HEADING THE DEMOCRATIC TICKET):

(II) HE HAD TOLD THESE SENATORS, AS HE HAD TOLD THE PRESIDENT AT A PRIVATE LUNCH MEETING AT THE WHITE HOUSE ON 7 SEPTEMBER THAT HE HAD NOT RULED OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF RUNNING.

(III) HIS DECISION, WHICH HE WOULD PROBABLY ANNOUNCE TOWARDS THE END OF THE YEAR, WOULD BE BASED ON HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S HANDLING OF THE ECONOMY OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS AND OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF QUOTE WHETHER THINGS WERE GETTING BETTER UNQUOTE AND

(IV) HE EXPECTED QUOTE A HARD-FOUGHT BATTLE BOTH FOR THE NOMINATION AND THE ELECTION UNQUOTE.

2. THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT DEPARTURE FROM THE LINE HE HAS TAKEN UP TO NOW THAT HE EXPECTED THE PRESIDENT TO BE RE-NOMINATED AND RE-ELECTED AND THAT HE EXPECTED TO SUPPORT HIM. IT IS NOW WIDELY BELIEVED THAT KENNEDY WILL RUN, BUT THE RISK OF SPLITTING THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY MUST STILL WEIGH HEAVILY IN KENNEDY'S CALCULATIONS. THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION THAT HIS STRATEGY MAY BE TO PERSUADE CARTER THAT THE BEST HOPE FOR DEMOCRATIC UNITY AND FOR A SUCCESSFUL DEMOCRATIC CANDIDACY IN 1980 WOULD BE FOR THE PRESIDENT TO ANNOUNCE THAT HE WILL NOT SEEK RE-NOMINATION, THUS LEAVING THE FIELD OPEN TO KENNEDY. BUT THERE HAVE BEEN NO SIGNS THAT CARTER IS PREPARED TO CONTEMPLATE THIS. (IT WOULD INDEED BE WHOLLY OUT OF CHARACTER): AND THERE ARE REPORTS THAT THREE WEEKS

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AGO CARTER PASSED A PRIVATE MESSAGE TO KENNEDY THAT HE INTENDED TO FIGHT FOR THE NOMINATION QUOTE TO THE LAST DELEGATE UNQUOTE - I. E. THAT HE WOULD NOT WITHDRAW IN THE FACE OF POSSIBLE SETBACKS IN EARLY PRIMARIES.

FCO PASS SAVING BONN, BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN, DUBLIN, LUXEMBOURG, PARIS, ROME, THE HAGUE, UKREP BRUSSELS, UKDEL NATO.

HENDERSON

[REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

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