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INFO SAVING PARIS BONN ROME TOKYO MOSCOW UKDEL NATO BIS NEW YORK
AND ALL C-G'S IN USA.

Prime Minister

*Sir N Henderson's
analysis of the democratic
convention*

MAF 21/8

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION, NEW YORK, 11-14 AUGUST

1. DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION DELEGATES CAME TO MADISON SQUARE GARDEN DIVIDED AND DEMORALISED. THEY EMERGED, AFTER A TRADITIONAL DISPLAY OF FRATRICIDAL INFIGHTING, WITH AN OUTWARD SEMBLANCE OF UNITY BEHIND PRESIDENT CARTER, BUT UNITED MORE BY FEAR AND LOATHING OF RONALD REAGAN THAN BY ENTHUSIASM FOR THEIR OWN PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE, AND WITH THE MUTUAL BITTERNESS OF THE CARTER AND KENNEDY CAMPS BY NO MEANS FULLY ASSUAGED.

2. THE DEMOCRATS HAD GOOD REASONS FOR THEIR UNCONFIDENT MOOD. PRESIDENT CARTER HEADS THE FIRST DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION SINCE THE 1890'S TO BE GOING INTO A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AT A TIME OF SERIOUS ECONOMIC RECESSION, AND HIS HANDLING OF THE ECONOMY IS SEEN BY MANY AS A BETRAYAL OF TRADITIONAL DEMOCRATIC VALUES. HE TRAILS REAGAN BY 20 POINTS IN THE POLLS, WHICH ALSO SHOW A UNITED AND CONFIDENT REPUBLICAN PARTY CURRENTLY RUNNING NECK-AND-NECK WITH THE DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION RACES. A RECENT GALLUP POLL SHOWED THAT ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF DEMOCRATS NATIONWIDE WOULD PREFER A PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE OTHER THAN CARTER; BUT SIGNIFICANTLY (AND IN CONTRAST WITH THE NOISY ENTHUSIASM OF THE KENNEDY DELEGATES IN NEW YORK), ONLY ABOUT A QUARTER OF THEM EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE FOR KENNEDY.

3. AGAINST THIS UNPROMISING BACKGROUND, CARTER CAN COUNT THE CONVENTION A REASONABLE SUCCESS. HAVING DEFEATED KENNEDY ON THE CRUCIAL RULES VOTE ON THE FIRST EVENING, HE WENT ON TO WIN RENOMINATION BY A CONVINCING MAJORITY. IF HE HAS NOT YET UNITED THE PARTY BEHIND HIM MUCH OF THE RESPONSIBILITY MUST LIE WITH KENNEDY, WHO FOUGHT ON BY FRONTAL ATTACKS AND PROCEDURAL PLOYS LONG AFTER IT WAS CLEAR THAT HE HAD LOST AND WHO, HAVING MARCHED HIS TROOPS TO THE TOP OF THE HILL, WILL BE HARD-PRESSED TO MARCH THEM DOWN AGAIN AND MAY BE LOATH TO MOBILISE THEM ON CARTER'S BEHALF.

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4 INDEED THE CONVENTION WAS LARGELY DOMINATED BY OUTWARD DEBATE AND BEHIND-THE-SCENES NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE PRICE CARTER WOULD HAVE TO PAY FOR KENNEDY'S ENDORSEMENT. IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF KENNEDY'S ELECTRIFYING SPEECH ON TUESDAY NIGHT, CARTER WAS FORCED TO CONCEDE MANY OF THE AMENDMENTS TO THE ECONOMIC SECTION OF THE PARTY PLATFORM DEMANDED BY KENNEDY, INCLUDING A DOLLARS 12 BILLION JOB-CREATION PROGRAMME (BUT NOT A WAGES AND PRICES FREEZE). THE CARTER WHIPS SUBSEQUENTLY RALLIED THEIR FORCES TO DEFEAT OTHER KENNEDY DEMANDS INCLUDING, NOTABLY, REPUDIATION OF THE MX MISSILE PROGRAMME. IN THE END KENNEDY ENDORSED, EVEN IF HE DID NOT EXACTLY EMBRACE, THE PRESIDENT. BUT CARTER LEFT MANY KENNEDY LIBERALS DISGRUNTLED WHEN IN HIS WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE AMENDED PLATFORM (WHICH PARTY RULES REQUIRED HIM TO CIRCULATE) HE EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT GIVING PRIORITY TO THE FIGHT FOR JOBS, RATHER THAN AGAINST INFLATION, AND REFUSED TO COMMIT HIMSELF TO A SPECIFIC FIGURE FOR THE JOB-CREATION PROGRAMME.

5. KENNEDY'S ADDRESS TO THE CONVENTION WAS PROBABLY THE BEST ORATORICAL PERFORMANCE OF HIS CAREER AND A PERSONAL TRIUMPH WHICH MADE CARTER'S ACCEPTANCE SPEECH LOOK LACKLUSTRE BY COMPARISON. MORE OF A RALLYING CALL THAN A VALEDICTORY, KENNEDY'S RINGING DECLARATION OF LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND ALL-OUT ATTACK ON REAGAN HAD A CATHARTIC EFFECT ON THE CONVENTION.

6. LAST NIGHT'S SPEECHES BY MONDALE AND CARTER ALSO CONCENTRATED ON ATTACKING REAGAN AND THE REPUBLICAN PROGRAMME. CARTER CONTRASTED THE FUTURE OF ECONOMIC SECURITY, JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFERED BY THE DEMOCRATS WITH THE REPUBLICAN FUTURE OF SURRENDER: QUOTE THE SURRENDER OF OUR ENERGY FUTURE TO THE MERCHANTS OF OIL: THE SURRENDER OF OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE TO A BIZARRE PROGRAMME OF MASSIVE TAX CUTS FOR THE RICH, MASSIVE SERVICE CUTS FOR THE POOR, AND MASSIVE INFLATION FOR EVERYONE UNQUOTE. THE PRESIDENT COMPARED WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS REAGAN'S CALL FOR A NEW NUCLEAR ARMS RACE WITH HIS OWN POLICIES OF PRUDENT STRENGTHENING OF AMERICA'S /DEFENCE

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DEFENCE CAPABILITIES COUPLED WITH COMMITMENT TO ARMS CONTROL. IN CONTRAST TO HIS OWN MEASURED RESPONSE TO THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN, REAGAN HAD OPPOSED THE SUSPENSION OF GRAIN SALES, OPPOSED DRAFT REGISTRATION AND WAFFLED ON THE ISSUE OF THE OLYMPIC BOYCOTT; QUOTE HE DOES NOT SEEM TO KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THE RUSSIANS. HE IS NOT SURE WHETHER HE WANTS TO FEED THEM, PLAY WITH THEM, OR FIGHT WITH THEM UNQUOTE. THE PRESIDENT AGREED WITH GEORGE BUSH'S CAMPAIGN DESCRIPTION OF REAGAN'S TAX CUT PROPOSALS AS QUOTE VOODOO ECONOMICS UNQUOTE. THE REPUBLICANS COULD ONLY COMBINE THEIR PROMISES OF A BALANCED BUDGET, MASSIVE TAX CUTS AND MASSIVE INCREASES IN DEFENCE SPENDING BY ABOLISHING EVERYTHING ELSE QUOTE FROM EDUCATION TO FARM PROGRAMMES TO THE GI BILL TO THE NIGHT-WATCHMAN OF THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNQUOTE. TO SUCCUMB TO THAT FANTASY WORLD WOULD BE TO WAKE UP IN A NIGHTMARE WHEREAS TO START WITH REALITY, AS THE DEMOCRATS DID, WOULD BE THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS REALISING QUOTE THE DREAM OF ALL AMERICANS OF A GOOD LIFE IN A NATION STRONG AND SECURE UNQUOTE.

7. IN THE COMING CAMPAIGN, THE DEMOCRATS WILL SEEK TO MAKE REAGAN THE ISSUE JUST AS REAGAN WILL SEEK TO FOCUS THE SPOTLIGHT ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S RECORD. IF ANDERSON CONTINUES TO DROP IN THE POLLS (HIS SUPPORT HAS SLIPPED FROM 24 PERCENT TO 13 PERCENT IN TWO MONTHS) WE CAN EXPECT TO SEE A TRADITIONAL TWO PARTY CAMPAIGN. THE PRESIDENT IS AT PRESENT THE UNDERDOG BUT OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS HE HAS ONCE AGAIN DEMONSTRATED HIS ABILITY TO EMERGE THE HERO OF DISASTERS SOMETIMES OF HIS OWN MAKING. IF HE CAN KEEP KENNEDY AT HIS SIDE, AND NOT AT HIS THROAT, HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO RALLY HIS PARTY FOR WHAT IS LIKELY TO BE A BITTER AND CLOSE-FOUGHT BATTLE WITH THE REPUBLICANS.

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