

FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

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FCO

29 March 1988

M. G. ... 12/iv
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Wes Common
Presiding
Dear John, 11/4

1. cc. Mr. ... : HMT
Mr. Haldy : DAF
Mr. Roberts : DTI.
2. cc. Mr. Braitwaite
Miss Spencer O.S.
3. Mr. Wall. 2/50.
: 6/iv.

-NEW
THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COMMISSION

1. I promised to let you have before Easter an assessment of the EC Commission Presidency stakes. This particular race, like other grander concurrent fixtures in the US and France, casts a long shadow before it; and the chattering classes in Brussels have been hard at work for some weeks now. But there are more questions than answers about who is in the race, let alone about who will win.
2. The main reason for this uncertainty is the question mark over Delors' own intentions. He has clearly not himself despaired of a call to the Matignon on or about 8 May; and, if the telephone does ring, it can be assumed that he will go. I am not well placed to speculate on the chances of that happening. The conventional wisdom in Brussels is that it will only occur in the event of a narrow Mitterrand victory, ie one which discourages immediate dissolution of the Assembly but necessitates an effort to construct a new majority within the membership of the present Assembly. It all looks to me like a sufficiently long shot to spare you an analysis of the complicated situation we would be in if we have to find an interim, May-December 1988 President.
3. And if the telephone does not ring? In those circumstances there is much circumstantial evidence that Delors will seek another term. It is true that his Chef de Cabinet, Lamy, is at pains to keep his master's options open; but Delors is a compulsive workaholic, genuinely passionate about Europe, who has got a second wind from the success of the European Council in February. David Williamson says we can safely disregard Lamy's loyal modesty. Would Delors get another term without difficulty? I do not quite see who is going to stop him. His standing with most Heads of Government is pretty good. There is of course endless speculation about our own Prime Minister's attitude to such an eventuality. I take care neither to feed it nor to answer it.

4. If, for some reason or another, Delors is not a candidate, what is the rest of the field? Bangemann was much spoken of some months ago but his star seems to be on the wane. His shortcomings are pretty well known; the Wörner appointment to NATO weighs against him; the problems of replacing him as Head of the FDP are perhaps conclusive. Lubbers too is often spoken about. But there is no evidence that he actually wants the job, good though he would probably be at doing it. The Belgian press runs Martens rumours from time to time; no-one else seems very interested in them nor convinced he could do the job well. Pandolfi is occasionally mentioned for the (?) third time but he is more clearly seen now than before to be a technocrat rather than a politician with clout. Then there is a clutch of present Commissioners more or less assiduously promoting their own candidatures (Andriessen, Christophersen, Sutherland). I would rate them in about that order, but none of them terribly high. We could, I would suggest, live reasonably comfortably with any of them, although Andriessen has a worryingly obstinate streak when he gets the bit between his teeth, of the oils and fats tax, hormones, Christophersen is every bit as much a consensus, all-things-to-all-men operator as any Danish politician and Sutherland would frankly be boxing a bit above his weight (not literally, it is rising).

5. All this is rather vague. I am afraid my advice at this stage has to be based on tinkering with the old Stock Exchange dictum and say "go away, come back in May (preferably shortly after the 8th)".

6. There are two additional points worth registering. The first is that Delors is putting a lot of emphasis on the theme of continuity, the need to implement the future financing package and to push through the single market programme. Given that new Presidents of the Commission, like new Prime Ministers and even new Ambassadors, always seek to make their mark by distinguishing themselves from their predecessors, and on the assumption that we ourselves would be happier with a "steady as she goes" approach than with one liable to produce new initiatives - monetary, institutional, social policy or what would you - this is perhaps a factor which should be given some weight.

7. The second is that, if Delors is up and running, there will be a temptation to say "2 years, but no more". It is just important to remember that one is then committed to appointing the next President of the Commission after that from among the sixteen other members of the 1989 Commission (because Commissioners get a four year term which cannot be individually terminated other than by voluntary resignation or compulsory retirement, eg on ground of misconduct).

/ 8. For the sake of completeness, I enclose Williamson's current marking of the card for the members of the new Commission.

*The Enc
David*

D H A Hannay

cc: R G Lavelle Esq - Cabinet Office
Ambassadors in EC posts

RESTRICTED

WILLIAMSON'S MAP FOR THE NEW COMMISSION

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|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>France</u> | Delors A N Other (Cheysson to become a Diplomatic Adviser at the new Mitterrand Elysée) |
| <u>Italy</u> | Pandolfi Ruggiero But Natali is putting up a stalwart rearguard action for another term |
| <u>Germany</u> | Bangemann (or conceivably Narjes if B. not available) Schmidhuber |
| <u>Spain</u> | Marin Malutes |
| <u>UK</u> | ? ? |
| <u>Denmark</u> | Christophersen (but not certain) |
| <u>Ireland</u> | Sutherland (but not certain) |
| <u>Luxembourg</u> | Anyone but Mosar |
| <u>Belgium</u> | De Clercq very likely to go. Outcome depends on current governmental negotiations. |
| <u>Greece</u> | Simitis |
| <u>Portugal</u> | Cardoso likely to go. |
| <u>Netherlands</u> | Andriessen |