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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

22 June 1989

Die Anish

Two months spent  
flattering him at the  
beginning would probably  
be a good investment

Dear Charles,

European Council: Greek President

President Sartzetakis has now decided to lead the Greek delegation to Madrid. He will be accompanied by Theo Pangalos, the Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs. I attach personality reports on them both, and Athens telnos 262 and 264, which comment on this decision.

CDD  
23/6

Yours ever,

*Richard Gozney*

(R H T Gozney)  
Private Secretary

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10 Downing Street

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FM ATHENS  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELNO 264  
OF 211120Z JUNE 89

FOLLOWING PERSONAL FOR WESTON, SED, FROM DONNELLY

ATHENS TELNO 262: SARTZETAKIS AT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL.

1. SARTZETAKIS IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO FLATTERY. HE IS ALSO LIKELY TO FEEL RATHER LOST AT THE COUNCIL, KNOWING HARDLY ANYONE. OBVIOUSLY A SUBSTANTIAL MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE A WASTE OF TIME. BUT A FEW WORDS OF WELCOME IN THE MARGINS WOULD CERTAINLY GO DOWN WELL. HIS ENGLISH WOULD PROBABLY BE GOOD ENOUGH TO GET THE MESSAGE.

MIERS

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TO DESKBY 211200Z FCO  
TELNO 262  
OF 211045Z JUNE 89  
INFO IMMEDIATE OTHER EC POSTS

MY TELNO 261: GREEK DELEGATION TO MADRID EUROPEAN COUNCIL.

SUMMARY

1. PRESIDENT TO HEAD DELEGATION. AN UNGUIDED MISSILE.

DETAIL

2. IT WAS ANNOUNCED HERE LATE ON 20 JUNE THAT PRESIDENT SARTZETAKIS WOULD LEAD THE GREEK DELEGATION TO THE MADRID EUROPEAN COUNCIL. HE WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY PANGALOS WHO IN THE CARETAKER GOVERNMENT RETAINS HIS POSITION AS ALTERNATE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS. MITSOTAKIS, WHOSE CURRENT MANDATE TO TRY AND FORM A GOVERNMENT WILL EXPIRE BEFORE MADRID, HAS SUGGESTED THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OTHER MAJOR PARTIES OUGHT ALSO TO BE IN THE DELEGATION.
3. SARTZETAKIS (SEE LPR), WHO MIGHT REASONABLY BE EXPECTED TO STAY IN GREECE DURING THE CONTINUING POLITICAL CRISIS, IS A BIZARRE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF GREEK REPRESENTATION AT MADRID. IT IS NOT CLEAR FROM THE CONSTITUTION WHAT MANDATE (IF ANY) HE CAN HAVE TO EXPRESS GREEK GOVERNMENT VIEWS. HE IS IN ANY CASE NOT A FIGURE WHO COMMANDS RESPECT. ON RECENT VISITS TO AUSTRALIA AND THE NETHERLANDS HIS QUIRKY SELF-IMPORTANCE AMOUNTED ALMOST TO MEGALOMANIA AND IN AUSTRALIA HE EMBARRASSED THE GOVERNMENT BY HIS HANDLING OF YUGOSLAV PROTESTS OVER MACEDONIA. HIS STRONG VIEWS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF HELLENISM ALSO TEND TO COLOUR HIS VIEWS ON CYPRUS. HE SPEAKS LITTLE ENGLISH BUT RATHER BETTER FRENCH. HIS INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IS VERY LIMITED.
4. THE MFA EXPECT THERE TO BE LITTLE DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS BETWEEN THE MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES HERE ON THE MAIN ITEMS ON THE MADRID AGENDA AND HOPE THAT PANGALOS WILL DO MOST OF THE SPEAKING FOR GREECE. THERE CAN BE NO GUARANTEE OF THIS. THE BEST WE CAN HOPE FOR IS A LOWKEY GREEK PERFORMANCE, WITH POLITICIANS MINDS FOCUSED ON EVENTS AT HOME.

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SARTZETAKIS, CHRISTOS

President of the Republic.

Born Salonica in 1927. Studied law at the University of Salonica and became a member of the judiciary in 1955. He came to the public eye in 1963 as the examining Magistrate investigating the murder of the left wing deputy Gregoris Lambrakis. In this celebrated case he resisted pressure from elements of the Karamanlis regime who sought to obscure the suspicion that the murder was performed at the instance of prominent members of the right wing. The case was subsequently the subject of a film, "Z", in which Sartzetakis' role was central.

Pursued post-graduate studies in Paris in 1965 but returned to Greece in 1967. Dismissed from the judicial body by the Junta in 1968. Arrested, released and re-arrested under the Junta and on the second occasion was held without trial for a year on charges of undertaking anti-Junta activities through PAK, the resistance organisation established by Andreas Papandreou (although accounts differ on whether or not he was a PAK member). Prominent members of the current PASOK Government were arrested with Sartzetakis. International pressure secured his release in 1971.

Following the return to democracy in 1974 he was reinstated in the judicial body as a judge on the Court of Appeal. In 1975 he was one of 3 judges who refused the extradition of Rolf Pohle to Germany (the decision was subsequently overturned by the Supreme Court). Promoted to President of the Appeal Court in 1982. Elected President of the Republic in March 1985 when, following PASOK's last minute decision not to support the re-election of Karamanlis, he became the surprise candidate (after 3 other judges had refused the offer).

He was originally respected for his handling of the Lambrakis affair, but then lost any public sympathy because of his eccentricity and megalomania (he never moves without his armoured Mercedes which is often transported in a Hercules aircraft). Has had frequent rows with the Government over petty procedural issues but gives way on major questions (eg. the law passed in early 1987 which gave the Church's property to the state). At heart he has remained a lawyer and has developed no political sensitivity. On state visits abroad (eg to Australia in 1988) he has often upset his hosts by his obliviousness to local sensitivities. In his speeches he frequently expresses a deep-seated and quirky nationalism (eg over Macedonia) which embarrasses the Government. He strongly believes in the importance of the Presidency (whose powers were drastically reduced shortly after his election), but fails to distinguish between substance and external trappings. Allergic to journalists and is mercilessly mocked by the press. Appears to suffer from an inferiority complex vis-à-vis Karamanlis. His officials find him impossible to work for. He has regained some public respect as the Koskotas Scandal has diminished that of the Government and politicians, staking out a role as the defender of democracy. He could find himself in a controversial constitutional position if the elections produce no outright winner. Not thought a likely candidate for re-election to the Presidency in March 1990.

Widely read and has a considerable personal library. Married to Efrossmi (Efi), an archaeological and former official at the Athens Academy. One young daughter. Little English but better French.

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PANGALOS, THEODOROS

Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs with responsibility for European Community Affairs. PASOK Deputy for Attica. Alternate Member of PASOK Executive Bureau.

Born 1938 at Elefsina. Studied law and economics at the University of Athens and was active in Communist and left wing youth movements. In 1965 went to Paris where he studied political and economic science, subsequently teaching at the Sorbonne. He returned to Greece in 1978 and practiced law. In 1981 he was elected PASOK Deputy for Attica. In July 1982 he was appointed Under Secretary for Commerce but in January was moved to the MFA initially as Under Secretary but was promoted to Alternate Minister in July 1985.

The grandson of the dictator, with something of the Albanian bully in his character. But an able and self-confident operator, with a good grasp of community business. He did not make friends during the Greek Presidency. His temper makes him unpopular with his officials. But he can be amusing.

Speaks good English. Divorced with one daughter.