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From
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY
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Five

SECRET

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To: All Members of the Cabinet

The attached document is the Strategy Paper which Geoffrey and I have had produced. Its intention is to ensure that we are working along the same lines during this period of the run up to the European Election and the Election itself.

John Selwyn Gummer, MP

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 1984 - CONSERVATIVE STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To elect as many Conservative candidates as possible.
- 2) To secure a vote of confidence in the Government's policy towards the EEC.
- 3) To secure a vote of confidence for the Government.
- 4) To prevent Labour from using the elections to strengthen Neil Kinnock's leadership and to increase party unity.
- 5) To prevent the Alliance from capturing any seats, particularly important in East Anglia, the South and West.

BACKGROUND

1. The Conservative Party has a strong position on the European Community. We stand up for British interests but are also committed to making a success of the Community. We have achievements to point to, and we are pursuing policies for reforms which command popular support. We are well-positioned between the negative attitudes of Labour and the 'starry-eyed' idealism of the Alliance parties.
2. We have 60 out of the 78 European Parliament seats in Britain. If the 1983 election results are reproduced in the European elections on 14 June, we could see a small drop in our representation at Strasbourg. We will therefore have to do better than in 1983, through differential turnout or otherwise, to hold our present number of seats.
3. Domestic issues are likely to play a major part in this campaign. It is already clear that our opponents will seek to re-define the ground of debate and to focus on both domestic and foreign policy generally. Strictly Community matters will only be one aspect of a wider debate.

OTHER PARTIES

Labour

4. Labour need to re-establish themselves as the major opposition to the Conservatives and to bolster Neil Kinnock's leadership with a display of unity. Their principal concern will be to beat the Alliance decisively in the popular vote. On European matters, they will try to demonstrate that Conservatives are isolated in Europe and that by contrast they are part of a Europe-wide, and world-wide, Socialist brotherhood. Neil Kinnock's call for a 'New Messina' embracing all European states and his attempt to invoke the support of not only the Greek Socialist Government but also President Mitterrand for his policies, shows the importance he attaches to avoiding the label of isolationism which proved so damaging at the last election.
5. Labour will also seek to demonstrate that Conservatives are not tough enough in protecting British interests in Europe. They will attack the element of flexibility in our policy on own resources, claim we are insufficiently radical on reform of the CAP, and seek to dub us 'the party of the farmers'. They will try to blame any deficiency of the Community on us (bureaucracy, harmonization, etc). They will try to exploit any differences of emphasis between HMG and the EDG. In particular they will attempt to use the Marlow/Taylor anti-Spinelli campaign to suggest that Conservative MEPs want to get rid of the veto.
6. Labour will seek to combine domestic and European issues to mount a major attack on the Government's policies and record. They will raise the 'Euro-nuclear debate' (CND plan to hold a poll outside polling

booths on 14 June), employment and workers' rights (stressing our opposition to Commission proposals), the handling of the economy (Neil Kinnock's Euro-interventionist New Deal), the NHS, and local democracy.

The Alliance

7. The Liberals and the SDP will attack on much of the same ground as Labour. Their aim will be the same - to establish their credibility as the main opposition, to give an impression of unity, and to show that the Steel-Owen combination can do well in its first serious electoral test. They are likely to concentrate on about a dozen 'winnable' seats, almost all of them 'marginal' to us. Their policies are likely to be more 'communautaire', with a hint of federalism. Illogically they may still seek to obtain protest votes from those who would like a more chauvinistic European policy from HMG. In general Alliance voters are less pro-European than their leaders or Conservative voters.

CONSERVATIVE STRATEGY

8. Conservative unity; divided Opposition:

If we are to succeed in exploiting the divisions within the other parties, we shall have to ensure that all Conservatives unite around the manifesto, and that the pro and anti-Community extremes of the party put an end to mutual provocation. This means that MEPs will have to accept the Government's position on the veto while members of the European Reform Group and others should stop attacking MEPs. Party members should avoid pursuing personal hobby-horses where these are potentially divisive. Particularly close co-ordination between HMG/EDG/Party will be necessary on all policy matters.

9. True to Europe, True to Britain:

It is in our interests to ensure that European Community arguments are not neglected, given the divisions, inconsistency and lack of achievements of our opponents. The Prime Minister and her resolute support for British interests in Europe must be the linchpin of the campaign. We must also be seen to support the Community, not least for the jobs and investment it brings to Britain. Labour are dressing up the same old antiCommunity obsessions in new clothes. They have no credibility in Europe, and can achieve nothing for Britain. The Alliance are so besotted with the Community they would throw away our veto. We have been consistent, Labour is constantly changing its mind. We have achievements, our opponents have none.

10. The Conservative Message:

Our stance will be affected by the outcome of the Brussels Summit, but our message should remain the same. We should extend the use of domestic 'catch-phrases' to European issues - the resolute approach, consistency, financial prudence and 'the business-like approach'. Similarly we can employ the same criticisms we use to describe the

Opposition's domestic policies on their European policies: more bureaucracy, interventionism, nationalization; for the Alliance, naivety.

11. Fair to Farmers, Consumers and Taxpayers:

We will face pressure from anxious farmers on the one hand, and from consumer organisations and the Labour 'party of the farmers' jibe on the other. We shall have to show the importance of the real reforms in the CAP which we are seeking, and our determination on financial control, while highlighting our record of making a success of the farming industry.

12. Conservatives Have Restored Respect for Britain:

We will wish to stress the increased respect for Britain abroad since 1979, the international consensus on economic policy, and our friendly relations with other Governments and Parties. The London Economic Summit (June 6th?) will be relevant in this. Labour's new internationalist rhetoric can be exposed as fraudulent and insubstantial and the role of their Socialist allies in Strasbourg in leading the campaign to block British refunds can be highlighted. The Liberals can be embarrassed by their free-market allies in the European Liberal Group, and the SDP by their total lack of allies abroad.

13. The Benefits of Collective Strength:

Together with our Community partners we can better safeguard democracy and stability in a dangerous world, and we also have greater weight in international trade negotiations. Labour want a non-aligned Europe, their policies would de-stabilize democracy, and their protectionist policies would damage the world trading system on which our prosperity depends.

14. Setting Industry Free:

Our economic policies are succeeding at home. The UK and West Germany are leading the Community out of recession, and our policies for opening up a true Common Market are an important part of our programme for economic regeneration and the creation of new jobs. Labour want the same mistakes they made in Britain to be repeated at a European level - and they threaten that if others do not agree they will retreat to a 'Fortress Britain' policy.

POINTS FOR ACTION

15. Ministers and EDG Spokesmen should intensify consultations on all policy matters in order to eliminate the scope for exploitation of differences of emphasis in the run-up to the elections.
16. Every effort must be made to end divisive activities by MPs or MEPs. Supporters and opponents of proportional representation should stick closely to the line that this is not an immediate issue and avoid other statements. Similarly, on the CAP, it will have to be explained to some back-benchers that it is not in the Party's interests to go on provoking anxiety in the farming community, and seeking to discredit the Government's approach.
17. Ministers, Party leaders and MEPs should do everything possible to involve MPs in the campaign, and to bring home to them and to party workers the importance of these elections for the Conservative Party.
18. Ministers should follow up the Foreign Secretary's letter of 27 February and look at Departmental responsibilities in the light of the European elections.
19. Ministers will need to prepare our electoral position in depth, not only on Community issues, but also on economic policy, on local government, on the NHS and on disarmament and defence.
20. Ministers should, where possible, add positive references about the Community to correspondence.
21. Every opportunity, whether in Parliament or elsewhere, should be taken to pin down our opponents to specifics on policy. The help of backbenchers should be enlisted in this task. This applies particularly to policy on farming, on protectionism and on defence.
22. Every effort should be made to expose the divisions among our opponents on the key issues. We should draw attention to the selection of extremists as Labour candidates.
23. Ministers will have to ensure that Manifesto-related matters, including clearance of drafts and participation in drafting sessions where appropriate, are dealt with rapidly.
24. Special Advisers should be alerted to the importance of the forthcoming European elections and increasingly involved in the preparations. They should make contact with appropriate members of the EDG Secretariat. Thought should be given now to the role of Special Advisers during the elections.
25. Ministers and their Special Advisers, and the EDG, will need to monitor carefully all Labour proposals from now until the European elections. Follow-up should involve costings and analyses where appropriate.
26. The Liaison Group will increasingly need to give attention to the European aspect of its work.