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EUROPEAN COUNCIL, BRUSSELS
29/30 MARCH 1982

GREENLAND

Brief by Foreign and Commonwealth Office

OBJECTIVE

1. If this subject is raised, to make clear that we shall look very closely at any new arrangement which may be proposed.

POINTS TO MAKE

2. Very difficult to comment on what is initially a question for the Danish Government, until we know what is proposed.

3. We shall need to examine very carefully how any proposed new status for Greenland fits in with our own needs.

4. (If discussion develops) Our own fishermen will certainly expect a suitable return for any privileged access to the UK market for Greenland's fishery products.

BACKGROUND

4. A consultative referendum was held in Greenland on 23 February, which resulted in a 52% vote against continued membership of the EC. The turnout was 75%. The precise votes were: for withdrawal 12,615; against 11,180; majority of 1,435.

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5. At a session beginning on 16 March, the Greenlandic Parliament is expected to debate a motion authorising a formal approach to the Danish Government and Parliament. This seems likely to seek to amend the EEC Treaty by excluding Greenland, and also to propose some future form of association with the Community, possibly similar to that available to other dependent territories of member states. Greenland's constitutional position as a part of the kingdom of Denmark will not be affected.

6. We understand the Danes hope to be ready to present a formal application in Brussels only in May, and they are therefore unlikely to raise the subject at this European Council. They would like to complete negotiations on the new status by the end of 1982 (during their Presidency), leaving 1983 free for completion of national ratification formalities. The new arrangement could then enter into force on 1 January 1984.

7. We are particularly concerned that the exclusion of Community fishermen from Greenland's waters will lead to greater pressure on ours, and shall be pressing for an adequate quid pro quo for any privileged access to our market. The Germans are also likely to be tough on fisheries.

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