



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Sir Robert Armstrong KCB CVO
CABINET OFFICE

1 April 1982

See letter

Mrs. Statham

Could you let me have your comments on the various dates suggested for briefing meetings - or discuss if it is easier.

SUMMIT MEETINGS

1. We shall have an unusual bunching of important international events in late May and early June. There is the Pope's visit to Britain on 28 May to 2 June; the Economic Summit at Versailles on 4 to 6 June; President Reagan's visit here on 7 to 9 June and the NATO Summit in Bonn on 9/10 June. All four events will involve the Prime Minister, and President Reagan will be taking part in the last three.

2. I think it is worth looking ahead to see how the briefing and preparation for these visits might best be organised. We shall want to spare the Prime Minister, and the other Ministers concerned, from being confronted with great masses of paper all at once.

3. The Pope's visit, which comes first, is the simplest, since it has no link with the events that follow. It is not yet clear what meetings will take place with members of the Pope's entourage during his visit. On present plans the Prime Minister will see him during or after the reception on the evening of 29 May. We have sought Sir Mark Heath's advice on whether any other meetings, eg with Cardinal Casaroli, will be necessary. On present plans, the meeting will not be a long one, so the briefing exercise should not be onerous. Subject to developments between now and May I suggest that we should aim to cover Northern Ireland, Poland (and East/West relations), disarmament (particularly nuclear), North/South relations, Central America and possibly Nigeria and the Middle East. It will be necessary to treat this as a separate briefing exercise, but we would not have thought that a specific briefing meeting would be required. There is no need for the Cabinet Office to become involved in coordinating the briefs. We will do this.

A.J.C. 1/4



4. There will be some overlap however in the subject matter of the Versailles and Bonn Summits and the talks with President Reagan. The starting time of the briefing process for the two Summits will be determined by the Preparatory Meetings for them. For Versailles, this means the last Personal Representatives' Meeting on 14/16 May, with the Political Representatives' Meeting that precedes it. For the NATO Summit, this means the meetings of Defence Ministers on 5/6 May and of Foreign Ministers on 17/18 May. As soon as the conclusions of the meetings are known, the briefing machinery will have to move into high gear.

5. As regards the Versailles Summit, we would expect the briefing to consist of some six economic subjects and three to four political subjects. They will be mostly ones with which the Prime Minister is familiar, so that the briefs can be kept compact. The usual arrangement is for the briefs for these Summits to be coordinated by the Cabinet Office, so let us do the same this time. I gather that No 10 have earmarked Thursday 27 May at 4.00 pm for the briefing meeting for Versailles. This would mean producing the briefs by 21 May, which would really be a bit early. You will hardly have been able to report on the Personal Representatives meeting on 14/16 May and we know from bitter experience how many last minute papers and developments have to be taken into account. I would recommend a briefing meeting on 2 or 3 June with briefs reaching Ministers on 27 May, before the Spring Bank Holiday. | ?

6. The precise relationship between the Versailles and Bonn Summits is not yet clear, so it is too soon to determine our objectives at each on issues which are likely to be discussed at both. But the briefing for the NATO Summit will have to be available before the Prime Minister goes to Versailles (i.e. by 3 June). We hope that briefing can reflect the fact that the NATO meeting should address a limited number of key issues, such as those highlighted in the Foreign and Defence Secretaries' minutes to the Prime Minister on 3 March. And for a number of subjects, in particular as regards East/West economic relations, much of the same material can serve for Versailles and Bonn. But it will be necessary to take stock of developments at Versailles and during the Reagan visit, so I think a briefing meeting on 8 or 9 June would be advisable. I suggest that as for previous Summits the briefing should be coordinated in the FCO. | ?



7. Many of the subjects likely to come up with President Reagan will be covered in the briefs for Versailles and Bonn. The important thing for that visit will be to produce a really good and clear steering brief, in which we would expect to focus on the Anglo-American relationship within the Alliance, plus one or two special subjects of bilateral concern. Subject to your views I would recommend that there should be a briefing meeting on Monday 7 June, before President Reagan arrives. If that renders otiose a subsequent briefing meeting on the NATO Summit, then well and good. Nearer the time Antony Acland will send you the usual objectives letter but I suggest that the Cabinet Office should coordinate the briefs.

8. You will want to discuss the precise requirements and timings with No 10, to whom I am copying this letter. But I thought it would be useful to set out some ideas at this early stage.

7-6-84

Michael Palliser

Michael Palliser

cc: J Coles Esq
NO 10

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