

AC please copy
① Mr Allison
② Mr Coles.

From: J Houston
Date: 19 January 198
cc: PS
PS/Mr Rifkind
Sir C Tickell
Mr Hannay
Mr Fairweather
Mr Sherbourne,
No

CONFIDENTIAL

Secretary of State

GERMAN ASPECTS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN ON EC

/ 1. The letter from Mr Beamish of our Bonn Embassy (copy attached) raises, I believe, important and urgent questions which have operational implications viz:

- (a) Should the PM do something to address German public opinion, and in particular our CDU friends, before direct elections?
- (b) If so, does this need to be a speech in the Federal Republic, eg as part of the launch of the direct elections campaign?
- (c) If not, who else should do so? Again, is there a need to tie in with the elections?
- (d) Are there means other than speeches, eg joint statements, exchange of messages, etc, which can achieve the aim?
- (e) Should a prominent CDU speaker be invited to participate in our campaign?

2. Information from party sources strongly supports the points in Mr Beamish's letter. Our CDU connections are virtually the only effective trans-national links we can point to in the direct elections and if the CDU drifts away from us, or we fail to exploit these links, it could be an embarrassment to us in the elections.

3. I believe our decision not to tip off the Germans about the Thatcher/Mitterrand meeting, while they tipped us off about Kohl/Mitterrand, will not be helpful in this context.

4. The question of CDU/Conservative activities in the election provides another topic for your meeting with the Party Chairman.

JH
J Houston



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Your reference

Our reference

P S Fairweather Esq
 ECD(I)
 FCO

Date

17 January 1984

Dear Patrick,

PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN ON BRITAIN IN EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

1. I am writing with reference to William Marsden's letter 021/14 of 22 December on this subject.

2. What Marsden says seems to us as valid for Bonn and the Federal Republic as it is for Brussels and Belgium. This applies particularly to his remarks about the Prime Minister.

3. The PM is not only the longest serving Head of Government in the Community but also the one who, in the Federal Republic at any rate, excites a greater mixture of admiration and interest than any other European politician. The legend of the 'Iron Lady' lives and it follows from that reputation that her views are regarded as those determining the policies of HMG. Given this high visibility and given her reputation as a conviction politician, whatever she says or does is noticed. The famous, "I want my money back" still sets off echoes when Britain and the Community are discussed. The Germans know that we want an equitable deal on the budget and that we want to prune CAP expenditure. We can and do argue that we want to secure these aims not only because they would serve British interests but also because they would be good for the Community. However, for many and that includes, I think, the vast majority here, there is a feeling that our avowed concern for the Community is no more than a cover for the pursuit of our own interests and that if they should ever be satisfied, we would be content and not match the commitment and determination we have shown pursuing them in other areas of Community endeavour. As the post-Stuttgart negotiations are resumed, and a fortiori, when the campaign for the European elections gets under way there will be a considerable risk that our posture will be interpreted as negative and by some as frankly anti-communautaire. We can counter this line of comment by stressing the value to the Community of what we are trying to achieve and by pointing to our ideas on new policies. But, as Marsden says, that part of our approach is fairly threadbare.

4. I have said that what the PM says gets attention. The obverse is also true. What she does not say is noticed as well. Although many, though by no means all, senior officials dealing with the Community accept that since 1979 the Prime Minister's attitude towards the Community has evolved and her sympathy for its aims and her

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valuation of it have greatly increased, in default of a clear statement in favour of the future development of Europe with a capital E, suspicions that at bottom we are interested in no more than a free trade area linger on. It is these suspicions which, in part at any rate, explain why the suggestion that it is only by the closest cooperation with France that the Germans can really hope to get Europe moving again find so many believers here, even though the more enlightened Germans recognise that on many points both within and without Community policy, French and German perceptions and interests clash.

5. Some Continental politicians, particularly Kohl, are all too ready to speak enthusiastically about the rather vague, almost mystical goal of European union. German officials, and German public opinion have, over the last few years, become notably sceptical about the Community and understand that European union, if attainable, is probably as far away as ever it has been, but in an obscure though at the same time deep seated way they all regard it as a good thing and something to be wished for. While we cannot share the idiom employed by these politicians, I wonder whether the opening of the campaign for the European elections would not be an opportunity for us to sketch out the British view of the kind of Europe we want. We might be able to invest notions like 'integration', 'solidarity' and 'convergence' with more resonance than they currently enjoy.

7. In the weeks and months ahead we shall continue to work on the German press. The facts of life and inputs from here as well, of course, as from Brussels, have wrought some encouraging changes and some satisfactory copy has resulted.

8. We take what opportunities occur for addressing the media here. These opportunities will increase as the European election campaigns get under way. We have already received numerous invitations to share platforms with the different political parties and shall do so.

9. I think, however, that if we are to continue to make progress we need to complete our message by filling out the big blank in the middle of it, ie what we really think about the future of Europe.

Yours ever

A J Beamish

A J Beamish

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