

PREM 19/3497

PM's requirements for the ^{submission +} format of briefs on overseas affairs, speeches, MP's correspondence, Parliamentary questions and other important occasions.

PRIME MINISTER

JUNE 1979

clearance procedure for statements + announcements.

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
8.6.77		2.10.91					
3.11.79							
12.11.79							
17.6.80							
14.7.80							
4.8.80							
13.11.81							
12.1.83							
2.2.83							
2.10.84							
9.10.84							
30.11.84							
25.1.85							
17.4.85							
28.1.86							
7.2.86							
10.3.86							
14.3.86							
47.3.86							
27.3.86							

PREM 19/3497



With the compliments of

THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

Christopher Prentice

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE
SW1A 2AH

CONFIDENTIAL

To: All Heads of Department

cc: PS/Ministers
PS/PUS
DUSs
AUSs

Briefing for No 10

I have talked to Stephen Wall at No 10 about the format of our briefing letters for the Prime Minister. Both he and we in Private Office are conscious that departments have to put extra work into briefing letters because of the requirement to set out the background to issues and then, separately, suggest what the Prime Minister might say.

We shall try a new format where it would save departments time (and paper). The briefing letters will set out the substance of issues, in a fairly staccato style, indicating clearly the problem for HMG and the solution we would like to see. They should be typed up in 1½ spacing. The Prime Minister will draw directly on this material, without a separate suggested line to take. If it is important that he should not use some of the material, we should make this clear by the usual caveat of "[not for use]".

I attach an example of the sort of format which we should aim for: it is a Treasury brief on the EMU IGC - a difficult and sensitive subject which they managed to cover in just over three sides in 1½ spacing.

Such a format will not always be possible, and in the case of some visitors we shall have to include background to the country and the visitor and we will end up with the sort of narrative PS letter which we have been sending. No 10 will not be rigid.

I should be grateful if departments could start to use the new format straightaway for briefs on complex subjects which lend themselves to the Treasury style (eg aid to the Soviet Union, EC and NATO issues, South Africa).

K. K. I. Sa
Private Secretary

2 October 1991

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

EMU IGC: KEY ISSUES FOR THE UK

Set out below is a list of issues which cause the UK difficulty in the EMU IGC. The list is not exhaustive but focuses on the areas of priority for the UK.

Content of Stage 21. *Monetary policy in national hands*

The UK has argued that national monetary policy responsibility should remain unambiguously in national hands in Stage 2. To this end, the UK regards it as very important that:

- a) *the European Central Bank is not set up until the decision to move to Stage 3 has been made. Setting up a central bank before it has a proper job of work to do could only lead to confusion of monetary policy responsibility. The Germans and Dutch support us on this, and the Dutch text is again helpful. A European Monetary Institute would operate in Stage 2; an ECB in Stage 3.*
- b) *Member States are not obliged to make their national central banks independent unless and until they move to Stage 3. Here, the Dutch texts are very unhelpful, requiring Member States to introduce legislative proposals before Stage 2 with a view to making their national central banks independent before transition to Stage 3.*
- c) *Member States are not obliged to ban monetary financing in Stage 2. Apart from breaking the principle of national monetary policy responsibility in Stage 2, this would affect our ability to run an overdraft with the Bank of England (Ways and Means advances). The present Dutch text would make it an obligation to prohibit monetary financing before entry into Stage 2.*

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

d) *Membership of the ERM is not a Treaty obligation in Stage 2. Although this featured in the Luxembourg draft Treaty, it has been dropped in the Dutch draft. There appears widespread agreement that an appropriate convergence condition (ie Member States' currency must successfully have stayed in the narrow band for a minimum period) is preferable.*

2. *Hardening the ecu.*

The current Dutch text provides for two possibilities: a frozen basket ecu (ie the currency composition of the ecu would be irrevocably fixed) and a hard ecu (ie the ecu would not be devalued against any ERM currency). Along with Germany and France, we are pressing for the latter.

Transition to Stage 3

3. *No imposition*

The UK position on this is clear: it cannot commit itself to moving to a single currency and single monetary policy without a separate decision by Government and Parliament at the appropriate time. The latest Dutch text is very helpful on this point, providing for a separate decision by individual Member States on whether to move to Stage 3. To underline the 'whether' nature of the text, the Chancellor has tabled an amendment which would add the sentence 'Unless a Member State decides to participate in the final stage it shall be under no obligation to do so'.

We will also need to keep a close eye on the opening articles of the Treaty dealing with the Community's objectives. These have yet to be discussed under the Dutch Presidency but must not imply any commitment to a single currency or single monetary policy.

4. *Convergence*

Together with Germany and the Netherlands, the UK has argued for rigorous convergence conditions for transition to Stage 3. The

Dutch text is again helpful in this respect, providing for stringent conditions relating to inflation, interest rates, budget deficits and membership of the ERM.

Content of Stage 3

5. *Capital share*

The UK's objective is for a capital share in the European Central Bank at least as great as that of France and Italy. The Luxembourg text is unsatisfactory, providing for an objective key based on GDP and population. This issue has yet to be discussed under the Dutch Presidency.

6. *Prudential supervision*

The Luxembourg draft Treaty gives the ESCB (and within it the ECB) the right to participate in the formulation and implementation of supervisory policies. The UK's objective is to minimise the role of the ESCB (and in particular of the ECB) in this area. The French have already argued on similar lines.

7. *Payment Systems*

The Luxembourg texts give the ECB a commanding role in all payments systems. In the UK these systems are in the private sector and we see no case for bringing them under ECB control. The UK objective is to limit the ECB to promoting efficient cross-border and high value systems.

Economic Policy

8. *Excessive Budget Deficits*

The UK remains opposed to legally binding limits and sanctions in relation to excessive budget deficits. As a fall-back (Wall to Heywood, 8 July), Ministers have agreed that such rules and sanctions should apply only to participants in Stage 3. The Dutch texts are unhelpful in this respect. Although sanctions would

CONFIDENTIAL

apply only in Stage 3, legally binding limits would apply in Stage 2. The UK has few, if any, supporters in this area and there is still much difficult negotiation to be done in the months ahead.

9. *Special financial assistance (or a 'bail-out' fund)*

The Dutch text includes a square-bracketed provision for special Community assistance for Member States in difficulties in Stage 3. The UK remains opposed to such assistance on the grounds that it is inconsistent with the 'no bail out' rule. In this, we have the support of only the Netherlands and France.

Miscellaneous

10. *Capital Movements*

The Treaty articles on capital liberalisation may have implications for the UK's corporation tax imputation system and ability to maintain proper rules on supervision: if so, we must press for their amendment. This issue has yet to be addressed under the Dutch Presidency; there may be tactical alliances to be forged with others who have special concerns on capital liberalisation: it is an area where many Member States have skeletons in the cupboard.

CONFIDENTIAL

*Duty that
to circulate to Private Secs*



CABINET OFFICE
3334
1 APR 1986
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No

*This was welcomed
at A T's meeting of
Dep Secs. So it will be followed*

From the Principal Private Secretary

*N.C.W.
9-4*

cc - Mr Malloby
 Mr Williamson
 Mr Unwin
 Mr Fairclough
 Mr Langdon

} For discussion at Dep Secs on 9 April

Sir Robert Armstrong

CABINET OFFICE BRIEFS

Following your recent minute on possible improvements in the service which the Cabinet Office provides for the Prime Minister, we have been considering with the Prime Minister how that might apply to Cabinet Office briefs. I should stress that the Prime Minister greatly admires the quality of briefs provided by the Cabinet Office for Cabinet and Cabinet Committee meetings and relies on them a good deal. But she does believe that the form of the briefs could be changed in the following ways so that they are even more helpful.

Length of Briefs

Briefs for some of the more complex items of business now run to 12 pages or more. That means that for individual agenda items, the Prime Minister may have to read upwards of 30 pages of densely argued material. She would not want to set an artificial limit on the length of briefs - a good longer brief which summarises the other documents is better than a shorter one that skimps on the argument. But clearly if there is scope for a general shortening of the length of briefs, that would be welcome.

Organisation of Briefs

Clearly it is important for the Prime Minister that briefs can be assimilated as quickly as possible. She thus wonders whether the section of the brief which sets out the "conclusion" might be more helpful if it was at the beginning of the brief rather than at its end. If the brief was organised in this way it would open with the decisions required at the meeting. This would give a ready and accessible guide during the meeting itself on the points at issue and it might provide too a useful framework for the rest of the brief so that it would concentrate attention on the purposes and outcomes desired.

The Prime Minister believes that there might be more scope for side headings, indentations, numbering of sub-paragraphs and other such devices to help with quick assimilation. Many briefs are already organised in this way but there might well be scope for encouraging greater use of such arrangements.

Timing of Briefs

Inevitably a high proportion of Ministerial meetings are held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and perhaps most of all on Thursdays around Cabinet. Since Thursdays is also a Questions Day, a very large amount of material often goes into the Prime Minister's Box on Wednesday night. The Prime Minister would find it very helpful if Cabinet Office could submit briefs (and arrange for papers to be circulated), wherever possible, in time for weekend reading, or at the very latest to arrive in the case of Thursday meetings on Tuesdays; and in the case of Tuesday meetings on Friday nights. Obviously there will be cases when this is not possible. But it should be the objective.

I would be very ready to discuss all this with you if you wished.

N. L. W.

(N. L. WICKS)
27 March 1986



SRWABH

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

Sir Robert Armstrong

CABINET OFFICE BRIEFS

Following your recent minute on possible improvements in the service which the Cabinet Office provides for the Prime Minister, we have been considering with the Prime Minister how that might apply to Cabinet Office briefs. I should stress that the Prime Minister greatly admires the quality of briefs provided by the Cabinet Office for Cabinet and Cabinet Committee meetings and relies on them a good deal. But she does believe that the form of the briefs could be changed in the following ways so that they are even more helpful.

Length of Briefs

Briefs for some of the more complex items of business now run to 12 pages or more. That means that for individual agenda items, the Prime Minister may have to read upwards of 30 pages of densely argued material. She would not want to set an artificial limit on the length of briefs - a good longer brief which summarises the other documents is better than a shorter one that skimps on the argument. But clearly if there is scope for a general shortening of the length of briefs, that would be welcome.

Organisation of Briefs

Clearly it is important for the Prime Minister that briefs can be assimilated as quickly as possible. She thus wonders whether the section of the brief which sets out the "conclusion" might be more helpful if it was at the beginning of the brief rather than at its end. If the brief was organised in this way it would open with the decisions required at the meeting. This would give a ready and accessible guide during the meeting itself on the points at issue and it might provide too a useful framework for the rest of the brief so that it would concentrate attention on the purposes and outcomes desired.

The Prime Minister believes that there might be more scope for side headings, indentations, numbering of sub-paragraphs and other such devices to help with quick assimilation. Many briefs are already organised in this way but there might well be scope for encouraging greater use of such arrangements.

SRW

Timing of Briefs

Inevitably a high proportion of Ministerial meetings are held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and perhaps most of all on Thursdays around Cabinet. Since Thursdays is also a Questions Day, a very large amount of material often goes into the Prime Minister's Box on Wednesday night. The Prime Minister would find it very helpful if Cabinet Office could submit briefs (and arrange for papers to be circulated), wherever possible, in time for weekend reading, or at the very latest to arrive in the case of Thursday meetings on Tuesdays; and in the case of Tuesday meetings on Friday nights. Obviously there will be cases when this is not possible. But it should be the objective.

I would be very ready to discuss all this with you if you wished.

(N. L. WICKS)
27 March 1986

NLW

DRAFT MINUTE TO SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG FROM NLW

CABINET OFFICE BRIEFS

Following your recent minute on possible improvements in the service which the Cabinet Office provides for the Prime Minister we have been considering with the Prime Minister how that might apply to Cabinet Office briefs. I should stress that the Prime Minister greatly admires the quality of briefs provided by the Cabinet Office for Cabinet and Cabinet Committee meetings and relies on them a good deal. She does however believe that there is some scope for improvement and this minute sets out some possibilities.

Length of briefs

As you will know briefs for some of the more complex items of business now consume 12 pages or more: that means that for individual agenda items the Prime Minister has to read upwards of 30 pages of densely argued material. The Prime Minister would not wish to see an artificial limit set on the length of briefs - she would prefer a good longer brief rather than one that skimps on the argument. Nevertheless you may feel that there is some scope for a general shortening in the length of briefs. This might also pay dividends in terms of the strain which the preparation of such briefs place on the resources of Cabinet Office itself.

Organisation of briefs

The important point here is to ensure that briefs are as assimilable as possible. The Prime Minister wonders whether the section of the brief which sets out the "conclusions" might be more helpful at the beginning of the brief rather than at its end. Thus organised the brief would open with the decisions for which the meeting was required. This would give a ready and accessible guide during the meeting itself on points at issue and might conceivably provide a better framework for the rest of the brief to direct itself towards the purpose of the meeting rather than its background.

The Prime Minister also wondered whether there was more scope for side headings, indentations, numbering of sub-paragraphs etc. to help with quick assimilation. There is already of course a good deal of this and it would simply be a question of encouraging those responsible for providing briefs to do a little more.

Timing of briefs

Inevitably a high proportion of Ministerial meetings are held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and perhaps most of all on Thursdays around Cabinet. Since Thursdays is also a Questions day, ^{very large} an intolerable amount of material often goes into the Prime Minister's Box on Wednesday night. Is it possible to seek to aim as a general rule for briefs as well as papers to be available two days before the meeting rather than, as often seems to be the case, very late on the previous night. Clearly this will be physically impossible on many occasions: but any progress we could make in that direction would be very welcome.

PRIME MINISTER

CABINET OFFICE BRIEFS

We have been considering whether the burden of your overnight work for Cabinet and Cabinet Committee meetings might be reduced without detriment to the quality of the briefing provided. Your Private Office are united in our admiration for the quality of Cabinet Office briefs and I believe that you share that general admiration. Nevertheless we believe that significant improvements could be made in the briefing. These would lighten your burden of reading while giving more practical help with the conduct of meetings. Some suggestions are outlined below and the purpose of this minute is to seek your views on whether we might pass them to the Cabinet Office.

Length of Briefs

It is better to have a good brief that is a little longer than to have several other documents.

In our view the length of Cabinet Office briefs is often excessive, (and we suspect longer than in times past). Often for individual items at Cabinet or Cabinet Committee meetings, you have to read upwards of 30 pages of densely argued material in the brief and the paper, etc. Moreover, the length of the briefs often leads to their late submission so you only have the night before the meeting to absorb them. We therefore propose:

- to press Cabinet Office to declare a self-imposed limit of 4 pages for each of their briefs with a possible extension to 6 pages (but no more) in unusual circumstances.

Organisation of Briefs

We believe that the briefs could be differently organised to make them clearer and shorter. We propose that:

- the Cabinet Office dispense with the section on "handling" on the grounds that you hardly need advice on whom

This is very useful - because it indicates who expects to contribute. The other usually knows not

to call after 7 years of conducting Cabinet and Cabinet Committee meetings!

- the "conclusions" section of the brief, which set out the purposes of the meeting and the points of decision, should be at the beginning of the brief rather than at the end. This would give you a ready and accessible guide during the meeting on the points for decision and might also encourage the brief to direct itself with more facility to the purpose of the meeting rather than its background.

- there should be more side headings, indentations, numbering of sub-paragraphs, etc, to help with quick assimilation. The idea would be that briefs might look more like the "taken in at a glance" material provided for Questions briefing.

Timing

The demands of Ministerial diaries mean that Thursdays will always be heavily loaded. Since Thursday is also a Questions Day, an immense amount of material goes into the Box on Wednesday night, often very late. We therefore propose:

- to ask Cabinet Office to submit briefs (and to arrange for papers to be circulated) wherever possible in time for weekend reading, or at the very latest, to arrive in the case of Thursday meetings on Tuesdays; and in the case of Tuesday meetings on Friday nights. This might be considerably easier to achieve if the briefs are much shorter.

Summary

To sum up we suggest:

- (i) shorter briefs with the self-imposed limit of 4 - 6 pages;

This would be very helpful

- (ii) differently organised briefs with the conclusions at the beginning; no paragraph on handling; and more use of clearer layout;
- (iii) a standing request that briefs for meetings, except where physically impossible, should arrive earlier - two working days before a meeting rather than on the previous day.

If you agree we will propose these points to the Cabinet Office.

N.L.W.

(N W WICKS)

20 March 1986

ce MR NORCROVE

MR. WICKS

I attach, as agreed, a draft minute to the Prime Minister encompassing the suggestions on Cabinet Office briefs which we all agreed last week. I have also incorporated your suggestion of more side headings, etc, and drawn the comparison with Questions briefing which is intended to be taken in at a glance. Obviously Cabinet Office briefs are more complex than Questions briefing but there is no reason why they should not use the same presentational tricks. We might also explore discreetly with the Prime Minister whether she would wish Cabinet Office to use slightly bigger type. I find the current lay out pretty difficult to read and I don't have to read 30 pages of it at 2 am in the morning. I have not included this in the minute.

IV

TIM FLESHER

17 March 1986

SRW (53)

PERSONAL AND IN CONFIDENCE

Nigel

Some briefs could be submitted before weekends.

The PM might also be helped if the briefs were typed on white rather than yellow paper.

David

SRWAAK

PRIME MINISTER

CABINET OFFICE BRIEFS

We have been considering recently whether there was any way in which the burden of overnight work for Cabinet and Cabinet Committee meetings might be reduced without detriment to the quality of the supporting material which you receive for such meetings. We in the Private Office are united in our admiration for the quality of the briefs which Cabinet Office provides and I believe that you share that general admiration. Nevertheless we believe that there are significant improvements which can be made which would both lighten your burden of reading while giving more practical help with the conduct of meetings. Some of those suggestions are outlined below and the purpose of this minute is to seek your views on whether we might pass them on to the Cabinet Office.

Length of Briefs

There is a general feeling in the office that the length of Cabinet Office briefs is excessive. Moreover, from the research that we have done (admittedly not exhaustive) there seems to have been a tendency for the length to increase. Two examples are attached: one from 1979, one from 1986. The 1979 brief apologises for its length but is only 4 pages long; that from 1986 runs to 12½ pages, admittedly on a major subject. The effect of these very lengthy briefs is that for individual items at Cabinet or Cabinet Committee meetings you have to read upwards of 30 pages of densely argued material. Moreover, the size of the briefs means that they are often submitted very late leaving you only the late night before the meeting to absorb it.

If you agree, therefore, we propose to press Cabinet Office to declare a self-imposed limit of 4 pages for each of their briefs with a possible extension to 6 pages (but no more) in unusual circumstances.

PERSONAL AND IN CONFIDENCE

Organisation of Briefs

We believe that the briefs could be differently organised to make them clearer and shorter. As a minor step we propose to Cabinet Office that they dispense with the section on "handling" on the grounds that you hardly need advice on whom to call after 7 years of conducting Cabinet and Cabinet Committee meetings! More important, we suggest that the "conclusions" section of the brief which actually set out the purposes of the meeting and the points of decision should be at the beginning of the brief rather than at the end. This would give you a ready and accessible guide during the meeting on the points for decision and might also encourage the brief to direct itself with more facility to the purpose of the meeting rather than its background.

We should also propose that there might be more side headings, indentations, numbering of sub-paragraphs, etc, to help with quick assimilation. The idea would be that briefs might look a bit more like the kind of material you receive for Questions briefing which is intended to be taken in at a glance.

Timing

As you are only too well aware the demands of Ministerial diaries mean that Thursdays always have been and probably always will be heavily loaded. Since Thursday is also a Questions Day, an immense amount of material goes into the Box on Wednesday night, often very late. We propose to ask more systematically than at present for briefs for meetings, as well as the papers themselves, to arrive in the case of Thursday meetings on Tuesdays; and in the case of Tuesday meetings on Friday nights. This might be considerably easier to achieve if the briefs are much shorter.

Summary

To sum up we suggest:

PERSONAL AND IN CONFIDENCE

- (i) shorter briefs with the self-imposed limit of 4 pages;
- (ii) differently organised briefs with the conclusions at the beginning; no paragraph on handling; and more use of clearer layout;
- (iii) a standing request that briefs for meetings, except where physically impossible, should arrive two working days before a meeting rather than on the previous day.

You may wish to discuss.

If you agree we can take this up informally with Robert Armstrong before making a more formal proposal in writing.

(N W WICKS)
17 March 1986

SRWAAK

PRIME MINISTER

CABINET OFFICE BRIEFS

We have been considering ^{is} ~~recently whether~~ there was any way in which the burden of ^{you} ~~overnight~~ work for Cabinet and Cabinet Committee meetings might be reduced without detriment to the quality of the ^{briefing provided} ~~supporting~~ material which you receive for such meetings. We ^{you} ~~in the~~ Private Office are united in our admiration for the quality of the briefs which Cabinet Office provides and I believe that you share that general admiration. Nevertheless we believe that there are significant improvements ^{made in the briefs. These} ~~which can be made~~ which would both lighten your burden of reading while giving more practical help with the conduct of meetings. Some of ~~those~~ suggestions are outlined below and the purpose of this minute is to seek your views on whether we might pass them ~~on~~ to the Cabinet Office.

Length of Briefs

^{In our view} There is a general feeling in the office that the length of Cabinet Office briefs is ^{often} excessive, ^{(and we suspect longer than in times past).} Moreover, from the research that we have done (admittedly not exhaustive) there seems to have been a tendency for the length to increase. ^{Two} examples are attached: one from 1979, one from 1986. The 1979 brief apologises for its length but is only 4 pages long; that from 1986 runs to 12½ pages, admittedly on a major subject. ^{after} The effect of these very lengthy briefs is that for individual items at Cabinet or Cabinet Committee meetings, you have to read upwards of 30 pages of densely argued material. ^{in the brief} Moreover, the ^{size} of the briefs ^{often} means that they are often ^{leads to} submitted very late ^{so} leaving you ^{can have} only the late night before the meeting to absorb ~~them~~.

If you agree, therefore, we propose to press Cabinet Office to declare a self-imposed limit of 4 pages for each of their briefs with a possible extension to 6 pages (but no more) in unusual circumstances.

MR. WICKS

I attach, as agreed, a draft minute to the Prime Minister encompassing the suggestions on Cabinet Office briefs which we all agreed last week. I have also incorporated your suggestion of more side headings, etc, and drawn the comparison with Questions briefing which is intended to be taken in at a glance. Obviously Cabinet Office briefs are more complex than Questions briefing but there is no reason why they should not use the same presentational tricks. We might also explore discreetly with the Prime Minister whether she would wish Cabinet Office to use slightly bigger type. I find the current lay out pretty difficult to read and I don't have to read 30 pages of it at 2 am in the morning. I have not included this in the minute.

TF

TIM FLESHER

17 March 1986

SRW (53)

Organisation of Briefs

We believe that the briefs could be differently organised to make them clearer and shorter. ~~As a minor step~~ We propose to Cabinet Office that they dispense with the section on "handling" on the grounds that you hardly need advice on whom to call after 7 years of conducting Cabinet and Cabinet Committee meetings! ~~More important, we suggest that the~~ "conclusions" section of the brief, which ~~actually~~ set out the purposes of the meeting and the points of decision, should be at the beginning of the brief rather than at the end. This would give you a ready and accessible guide during the meeting on the points for decision and might also encourage the brief to direct itself with more facility to the purpose of the meeting rather than its background.

Includ
i
ii
iii

ⁱⁱⁱ We should also propose that there might be more side headings, indentations, numbering of sub-paragraphs, etc, to help with quick assimilation. The idea would be that briefs might look a bit more like the kind of ^{provided} material you receive for Questions briefing which is intended to be "taken in at a glance".

Timing

(as to arrange for papers to be circulated)

As you are only too well aware the demands of Ministerial diaries mean that Thursdays ~~always have been and probably~~ always will be heavily loaded. Since Thursday is also a Questions Day, an immense amount of material goes into the Box on Wednesday night, often very late. We propose to ask ^{Cabinet Office} more systematically than at present for briefs for meetings, as well as the papers themselves, to arrive in the case of Thursday meetings on Tuesdays; and in the case of Tuesday meetings on Friday nights. This might be considerably easier to achieve if the briefs are much shorter.

to submit briefs whenever possible before in time for whatever ready, or at the very latest

Summary

Incl

To sum up we suggest:

- (i) shorter briefs with the self-imposed limit of 4-6 pages;
- (ii) differently organised briefs with the conclusions at the beginning; no paragraph on handling; and more use of clearer layout;
- (iii) a standing request that briefs for meetings, except where physically impossible, should arrive *early* two working days before a meeting rather than on the previous day.

You may wish to discuss

will papers have parts to be dealt / free
If you agree we can take this up informally with Robert Armstrong before making a more formal proposal in writing.

(N W WICKS)

17 March 1986

CC EG

CONFIDENTIAL

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

PRIME MINISTER

cc Sir Robert Armstrong

E(A): 9.30am 3 January 1986

Channel Fixed Link: Memorandum by the Secretary of State
for Transport E(A) (86)1

Background

At the Anglo French Summit in London on 18 November 1985 you agreed to visit France at the end of January to announce the choice of scheme for the Channel Fixed Link, if the two Governments decided to proceed. It has since been announced that your meeting with President Mitterrand will take place in Lille on 20 January.

2. Following the publication of the Invitation to Promoters in April 1985, four proposals were accepted by the joint Anglo French Assessment Group: Eurobridge, Euroroute, Channel Expressway and the Channel Tunnel Group. With the assistance of outside consultants (the list of United Kingdom consultants is at Appendix 1 of the Transport Secretary's Memorandum) the Assessment Group has analysed all of the projects except Eurobridge in as much detail as possible given the limited time available. The resulting Report consists of:

- i. The Main Report of 19 pages (the same text in English and French) - Appendix 2.
- ii. The Detailed Report, substantively the same in both languages but linguistically unaligned - Appendix 3.

CONFIDENTIAL

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

CONFIDENTIAL

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

The individual technical assessments listed in Appendix 1 (including the Schrodgers Report) whose conclusions comprise the Detailed Report, have not been circulated. The United Kingdom and French individual assessments differ in a number of respects, particularly over the likely costs of each project, and these differences have been acknowledged in the text of the Detailed Report where appropriate. A summary of the difference in cost estimates is given on page 5 of the Main Report.

3. A separate note by United Kingdom assessors, which draws the same conclusions and raises a number of factors inappropriate for inclusion in the Joint Report itself, is attached to Mr Ridley's covering memorandum. Although it makes no explicit recommendation - neither does the Anglo French report - it concludes that:

- i. Euroroute would not be financeable, even on the promoters' own figures for costs and revenues (para. 51) and has serious environmental and maritime drawbacks (paras. 43-47);
- ii. Channel Expressway is undercosted by £1 billion - or 35% (£2 billion - 75% in French estimation - see table in para. 15); has an unproven ventilation system and raises serious engineering problems with the boring of 4 parallel tunnels through uncertain chalk (paras. 35-36). The note also touches on the political sensitivities surrounding the Channel Expressway proposal, both regarding its possible unacceptability to the French and the domestic implications for the preservation of competition on the Channel crossing (para. 52);

CONFIDENTIAL

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

CONFIDENTIAL
COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

iii. CTG emerges as the most thoroughly developed project with the fewest risks (including being the least susceptible to terrorist attack), the least unpopular in Kent and, given the general uncertainty about financing a project of this size without external guarantees, potentially the most financeable.

4. There are two other Appendices:

Appendix 4 gives an account of the consultations both locally and nationally by the Department of Transport since receipt of the promoters' submissions. It highlights employment and environment as the two most frequently raised concerns.

Appendix 5 assesses the vulnerability of a Fixed Link to sabotage and terrorism in peacetime. No scheme is ruled out on these grounds but, because of the travellers' inability to stop in the tunnel, CTG is regarded as the least vulnerable.

Timetable

5. Assuming a decision is reached to proceed with a Link and an announcement made on 20 January the Treaty, on which parallel negotiations have been successfully completed, would be signed on 12 February in the United Kingdom. Legislation would be introduced in March in the form of a hybrid Bill which would enable as wide a spectrum of opinion and interests as possible to give evidence before Select Committees in both Houses of Parliament. The aim would be for Royal Assent in the spring of 1987, whereupon the Treaty would be ratified, the Concession Agreement signed and construction would commence.

CONFIDENTIAL

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Parliamentary Interest

6. The Report of the all-party House of Commons Transport Committee, published on 5 December, recommended by a majority of one, "that if the Governments decide to go ahead with a Fixed Link their choice should lie with the Channel Tunnel Group. Only if the Governments consider a fixed road link to be indispensable should the choice fall on Euroroute". The Report ruled out the need for a public enquiry and this view was endorsed by the one day's debate in Parliament on 9 December.

Public opinion

7. Opinion polls commissioned by the three main candidates at various stages have produced differing results as to the public's preference although there is a general preference for a drive through scheme if practicable. But all polls indicate that there is now a national majority in favour of proceeding with a Fixed Link despite the strong local opposition in Kent. A Mori poll in October indicated that 70 per cent were in favour of a Link and only 17 per cent against. A more recent poll of Members of Parliament indicated that 76 per cent were in favour.

ATTENDANCE

8. All members of the Committee are due to attend with the exception of the Chancellor, who will be represented by the Chief Secretary, the Secretaries of State for Energy and Northern Ireland. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Secretary of State for Defence, Solicitor General, Minister of State Home Office and Chief Whip have been invited to attend. The Paymaster General will represent the Secretary of State for Employment.

The Chancellor is coming¹⁴ but Mr Edwards and Mr Tebbit are not. They have sent in written comments.

CONFIDENTIAL

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

CONFIDENTIAL

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

The Transport Secretary's Memorandum

A DTp comment to me
in this was "brave and
accomplished."

9. The Transport Secretary's memorandum was circulated only two working days before the meeting (which was brought forward from 8 January) and only to Members of the Committee (ie one copy per Department). There has therefore been little opportunity for Departmental briefing of Ministers.
10. The memorandum suggests eliminating Eurobridge and Euroroute and choosing between the two bored tunnel schemes, CTG and Channel Expressway. The Transport Secretary's recommendation is for Channel Expressway and he suggests proposing this to M. Auroux at their meeting on 7 January, reporting back to E(A) on 8 January. If there is French resistance to Channel Expressway he suggests a fallback position allowing the market to decide between the two schemes and exploring the possibility of collaboration between them (ie the course recommended by Schroders).
11. It should be said that the Transport Secretary does less than justice to the French objections to Channel Expressway (para. 13). The Expressway proposal has taken various forms submitted throughout the assessment period (much to the concern of the other candidates). The final proposal for twin road and twin rail tunnels arrived six weeks after the 31 October deadline, with the last installment being delivered at the conclusion of the final meeting of the assessment group in Paris on 19 December. Mr Sherwood further offended the French by, on occasion, only sending copies of his latest proposals to the United Kingdom side of the assessment group. As the assessment makes clear a great deal of important information is lacking. But in addition to this and to their doubts about the feasibility of Expressway's large tunnels and the underestimation of costs, the French would have political difficulties in accepting the scheme of an American ^{entrepreneur} based in Bermuda and the owner of British Ferries, with no satisfactory guarantees of adequate French participation. Mr Sherwood has come a long way in the last few weeks to

CONFIDENTIAL

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

CONFIDENTIAL

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

remedy this situation but it is doubtful whether he has yet broken through the barrier of unacceptability for the French.

HANDLING

12. You should invite the Transport Secretary to introduce his memorandum. It raises a number of important issues (and overlooks others) which will need to be addressed. In particular the elimination of Euroroute on financial grounds means that the technical and financial viability of Expressway will require especially careful inspection.

MAIN ISSUES (a) PROCEDURE

13. But first you might suggest the Committee address certain basic procedural questions:

- a. In light of the Assessment does the Committee wish to proceed with the Link at all? The Assessment makes clear that there are doubts about the financing of all schemes. The Main Report (para. 16) states "A common conclusion is that on the pessimistic cost and revenue hypotheses none of the projects reaches the threshold of equity returns required or meets the criterion of maximum debt repayment period without refinancing". But, as the note by the United Kingdom officials and the Schrodgers Report conclude, a decision to proceed with the project and continuing political support are likely to encourage market support to coalesce behind the chosen promoter.

The Chief Secretary should comment on the financial feasibility of the project, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on the implications for our bilateral relations with France of backing out at this stage. Given the private sector nature of the project it might still be possible, with the 12 months legislative timetable,

CONFIDENTIAL
COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

CONFIDENTIAL
COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

for both Governments to allow the project to lapse without unacceptable embarrassment if, during that time, the necessary finance were simply not forthcoming. A decision to proceed will nevertheless have to be taken against the background of the overriding requirement that the chosen project should be capable of completing and operating the Link without any financial support from public funds and without any Government guarantees against technical or commercial risks.

- b. Is a decision on the choice of scheme really required before the Transport Secretary's first meeting with M. Auroux on 7 January?

On balance it would seem sensible for the 7 January meeting to be used only to sound out M. Auroux on French reactions so far, so that E(A) can take this into account when they meet on 8 January, prior to Mr Ridley's further meeting with M. Auroux on 9 January. A premature choice in favour of Channel Expressway on 7 January would only irritate the French with whom we shall have to work closely throughout the construction and operation of the Link. It would be most unfortunate to begin on the wrong footing after the preparations of the last year have gone so smoothly. But if Mr Ridley's brief for 7 January is to be constrained, this will have to be made absolutely clear to him at this meeting. (Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and Transport Secretary).

- c. In the last resort how necessary is it to choose a scheme by 20 January (see below)?

(b) SUBSTANCE

14. You might then move on to discuss the substance of the Assessment and the Transport Secretary's preference for Channel Expressway. The following are some of the main questions which should be addressed:

CONFIDENTIAL
COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Engineering

15. Ventilation

The challenge of a drive through scheme has always been that of overcoming the problem of ventilating 25 miles of tunnel. Euroroute's elaborate proposal for artificial islands was designed to shorten the tunnel. Even so they find it necessary to have a third ventilation shaft in mid channel. The Detailed Report (para. III A1) reveals that the electrostatic precipitators proposed by Channel Expressway for removing particles from the air are only proven over a distance of 3.5 kms. It concludes that the longitudinal ventilation system as planned would limit vehicle capacity to 1600 per hour - just over half that of other schemes and states "further development is needed to determine whether the proposed longitudinal ventilation system would allow safe operation at any traffic level". The costs of improving the ventilation to acceptable standards (which is considered possible) are not included in the additional 35% required to cover Expressway's general under-estimation of costs. Does the assessment justify faith in Expressway's ventilation technology? Given its already limited capacity, how will it cope with traffic jams backing up behind an accident or breakdown? There must be no risk to travellers of asphyxiation.

16. Tunnels

The greatest risk for all schemes is regarded as the geological uncertainty (Main Report para. IIa) of tunnelling through difficult chalk, particularly near the French coast where it is only some 15m thick. CTG proposes two 7.3 metre tunnels with a small service tunnel bored first to act as a pilot tunnel. Expressway proposes four parallel tunnels, two of them 11.3m internal diameter and without a pilot tunnel. The assessment states "there is no precedent in the world for a tunnel of this size". (Detailed Report para. II.A.1, and Main Report page 3).

CONFIDENTIAL

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Costs and Revenues

17. The table in para. 7 of the Transport Secretary's paper gives the costs and revenues using both the promoters' and the assessors' figures. The difference in net revenue between CTG's and the assessors' figures is 1.5%: Channel Expressway is 12% more optimistic than the assessors. The Transport Secretary states that the assessors' figures are just as likely to be wrong as the promoters'. But this is not very persuasive:

- a. the promoters' figures are bound to place the most optimistic light on their proposals. The purpose of the assessment was to attempt to test their figures.
- b. The Schrodgers Report states "Whichever scheme is selected, financial markets will have to be comfortable that cost and revenue estimates are reliable to within acceptable margins of error. None of the proposals have yet been subjected to detailed and rigorous analysis by the institutions or banks which will ultimately require independent estimates of both costs and revenues. None of the proposals could therefore now proceed on a non-recourse financing basis without further, detailed design work or verification of estimates". The results of these investigations, using similar data and expertise, are unlikely to differ greatly from the Governments' own assessment.

18. It is worth recalling some examples of cost overruns for recent major UK civil engineering projects:

<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Budget cost</u>	<u>Actual cost</u>	<u>Inflation adjusted cost</u>
	£m	£m	£m
Thames Barrier	23	461	105
Natwest Tower	15	115	28
Humber Bridge	19	120	32

CONFIDENTIAL

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Competition

19. The Transport Secretary states that Channel Expressway will best serve the interests of competition since it provides a drive through alternative. This overlooks the fact that the Link (ie both road and rail) will be owned by one of the main ferry companies. Will this not diminish competition on the Channel crossing? Is not Mr Sherwood, with his investment in ferries and his stated commitment to FlexiLink (the ferries alternative to the Fixed Link), the only candidate who might stand to benefit from delaying the construction of the Link? Given that he has no consortium behind him with interests in the completion of the project should the Government entrust the project to an entrepreneur with a possible conflict of interests?

Industrial action

20. The Transport Secretary states that CTG's proposal "leaves us at the mercy of the railway unions - both British and French". In fairness to CTG it should be said that the shuttles will be operated quite separately from the through trains by employees of CTG, (not BR and SNCF), with whom they have indicated their intention of negotiating no-strike agreements.

Relations with BR and SNCF

21. Can the Government be satisfied that any potential agreement between the Link and British Rail does not constitute a government guarantee and that any investment by BR will meet the normal criteria laid down? (Chief Secretary and Transport Secretary). How are Channel Expressway able to offer such favourable terms to BR? Are they to be believed? (The only reference in the Detailed Report is in V.F.1. The tentative agreements with all promoters were only concluded recently and their effects

CONFIDENTIAL
COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

on the revenues of each promoter are still being analysed. BR appears to have driven a hard bargain with CTG and Euroroute and to have been made a surprising offer by Channel Expressway).

Is a merger possible?

22. The possibility of a merger between CTG and Channel Expressway was considered informally by the United Kingdom assessors. They concluded that, while the idea could not be ruled out, it was hard to see what advantage either party would see in a merger. The schemes proposed are quite different - a choice ultimately has to be made - and the approach of a consortium, both in terms of building and financing the project is quite different from that of an individual entrepreneur. If forced it could prove an uncomfortable marriage.

*Sherwood and
Nicho Henderson
would not be
happy
partners.*

How to proceed?

CTG would probably have an interest in not cooperating; they would be in a strong position if the marriage broke down early enough.

23. If the Committee decide on CTG this is likely to prove acceptable to the French, despite their recent inclination towards Euroroute. There would be no difficulties about informing them on 7 January as there would be if the choice were Channel Expressway.

24. If, on the other hand, Ministers are not ready to make a final choice at this stage is there any way of gaining more time for further consideration while still meeting the French requirement for an announcement on 20 January? One possibility might be as follows. The joint announcement on 20 January with President Mitterrand could be on the following lines: two schemes have satisfied the Guidelines laid down by the two Governments, namely CTG and Channel Expressway: it is the Governments' firm intention to proceed with a Channel Fixed Link with bored tunnels; the Treaty will be signed as scheduled on 12 February; the Governments will make

CONFIDENTIAL
COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

a final choice between the two schemes in the light of further analysis and further indications of preference from the financial markets.

25. So far as the technicalities of the Treaty are concerned the lack of a chosen promoter is not considered to be an insuperable obstacle to signature, although it would be easier if the choice were limited to the two bored tunnel schemes. At some point it will be necessary to define the scheme for Treaty purposes. This could be achieved by a protocol or exchange of letters.

It is to tell me that 2-3 months might well not resolve the technical uncertainties over Channel Expressway. But extra time would help of course.

26. There are clearly attractions in taking a firm decision now and no certainty that a few extra weeks or months will make the decision any easier or wiser. However, the weight of evidence at present available favours the CTG option, and if the Committee are not ready to choose this, or would still like time to give the Channel Expressway a further chance to justify itself, then a compromise on the above lines would be worth exploring. It would in fact be on the lines of Schrodgers' own recommendation and would make it possible to delay the final choice at least until the introduction of legislation (which would have the Concession Agreement and the Treaty appended to it) in March, if necessary after the French Assembly elections. Any significant delay in introducing legislation* would, of course, begin to affect the choice of an election date in the United Kingdom for 1987. A disadvantage of the compromise, however, is that it might cause some confusion and doubt about the Government's ultimate intentions, and the French might interpret it as a back-door way of favouring Mr Sherwood.

** expected to take about a year.*


CONCLUSION

27. In light of the discussion you will wish to steer the Committee to -

- (a) decide whether still to proceed with the Channel Fixed Link;
- (b) provide the Transport Secretary with clear instructions for his meeting with M. Auroux on 7 January. If one scheme is clearly chosen, then he could be invited to inform the French accordingly.

CONFIDENTIAL
COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

If not, he might explore the possibility of the procedure set out above with the French, without indicating any United Kingdom preference for either of the two bored tunnel schemes. However if this proves unacceptable to the French on 7 January, then E(A) will be faced with the possibility of an immediate decision at its meeting on the following day.



J B Unwin

Cabinet Office

2 January 1986

Euron R57

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTERPAY
E(79)5 and C(79)6

BACKGROUND

Mr Prior's Paper on pay - C(79)6 - was originally intended for Cabinet but you diverted it to E and asked for a parallel paper by the Chancellor. This is now available to the Committee as E(79)5.

2. I do not think either paper sufficiently comes to grips with some difficult problems so this brief is inevitably rather longer than usual. I realise however that you may want to confine tomorrow to a "second reading" discussion.

3. This discussion will set the framework for the Government's approach to pay especially in the next pay round which begins in August. The broad lines of your strategy are established and your administration is likely to be far less involved in the detail of individual pay negotiations than were your predecessors. In particular you will be relieved of involvement in private sector pay settlements other than through maintaining the proper level of external financial discipline. But you will need to monitor carefully what is going on - if only because private sector settlements set the pace for public sector ambitions. And you will also find that some private sector settlements - like Fords next year - have a substantial influence on union negotiators in other private sector cases, especially where the mass unions run across firms and industries and where matching the "going rate" becomes a virility symbol for the negotiators concerned. This does not mean that the Government need interfere in detail. It does, however, place a good deal of importance both on maintaining the necessary financial discipline and on efforts to create the right climate of expectations in which bargaining takes place.

4. The real problems for Government arise in the public sector. The Government needs to set cash limits for next year in advance of knowing the outcome of pay negotiations and, in some of the nationalised industries, faces the additional problem that, because of their monopoly or quasi-monopoly position, management and men can jointly bleed the consumer. In addition the same problem

arises in the public sector as in the private where large unions bargain with a number of public sector employers in circumstances where the results of one negotiation read across to the others (the classic chain being gas, electricity, water but there are a number of others). And this year the unions co-ordinated their approach over the whole NHS/ Local Authority field.

5. The hardest problems are likely to revolve around cash limits. In the short run it is perfectly possible to set the limits on the basis of an expected outturn and to correct for any under-estimation by reducing staff numbers and services. But in the longer run this process, especially when accompanied, as it will be, by a separate and specific drive for economies, risks facing the Government with the choice of breaking its cash limits or accepting reductions in services below the levels which it wants to provide. This is an area where a good deal more thought is required, I suggest, before a fully workable and acceptable system can be devised. Clearly little can be done for next year. Cash limits will have to be set in the normal way and at whatever figure the Government feels to be justified, and the consequences accepted. But we really ought soon to begin to examine whether there are ways, eg by a better co-ordination of the timing of public service pay negotiations with the processes of setting cash limits, the Rate Support Grant and so on, which would enable a better fit to be made between forecast and achievement. It may also be that the uncertainties are such that we should be thinking of budgeting for a larger Contingency Reserve, especially to cover pay based on comparability, in order more readily to accommodate financial control with the bargains actually struck in the market place. (This would mean, on a technicality, putting the Contingency Reserve on a cash as opposed to a resource basis.) And in all this you will find your problems reduced as the size of the public sector shrinks and as the identification of options for cuts in functions creates a hidden "Contingency Reserve".

6. But for this year - the year of transition - I suspect you will have to improvise.

HANDLING

7. I have bracketed these two papers together on the Agenda, and I think the discussion will best be handled as a single item. You might start by asking the Chancellor to introduce his paper, which I suggest is a better framework for discussion, and then ask the Secretary of State for Employment to supplement it. The other main speakers at this stage will probably be

Secretaries of State for Industry and the Environment. Then I think you might take the Committee through the main headings of the Chancellor's paper (which incidentally covers most of the same ground as Mr Prior's) and pick up the remaining points from Mr Prior's paper at the end. In that case, the main topics are these:

- (a) the remainder of this round. The real risk is of 're-opening' past settlements. Now that you have decided to maintain the Clegg Commission, at least for the existing reference, the danger is reduced. Most probably the remaining public sector claims can be fitted into the pattern already established. There are a few difficult ones. Much the worst is the local authority APTC grades (covered by NALGO). The issue will be whether to refer them to Clegg. You will not want a snap decision at this meeting. You might therefore ask Mr Heseltine to put a paper to E(EA). The same procedure should apply to any other difficult cases - for example probation officers whose pay problems are already the subject of Ministerial correspondence.
- (b) Rate Support Grant - 1980-81. The Chancellor suggests that the autumn negotiations should take their tone from the Clegg findings. It will not be quite so simple as this (Clegg will not tell us what next year's pay outcome will be) and the RSG will have to include an estimate which will also in part determine the pattern of next year's wage round. Ministers cannot therefore wholly avoid taking a view about a desirable rate for settlements in the following pay round and they may want to take a preliminary look at this problem before the summer recess (there will be a relatively little time at the end of September to do so before the negotiations begin in earnest).
- (c) Public Services. You will also need to take a preliminary view on the desirable level of settlements, eg in the NHS, as well as the Civil Service, well before setting cash limits for next financial year - and this means taking a view not much later than Christmas. If the Chancellor agrees to this timetable, you might ask him to bring forward proposals towards the end of the year.
- (d) Nationalised Industries. The Chancellor proposes a general review of pay, prices, financial targets and efficiency. I note from Mr Lankester's letter of 29 May that you want to reserve judgement on how to organise the review which the Chancellor proposes. This needs to be related in some way to the general review of nationalised industry policy which Sir Keith Joseph has set in hand, and on which you have promised to arrange a general discussion in E when he has produced a revised paper. At this

stage - with no major industry pay settlements outstanding in the present round - you might simply note the problem, and say that you will write to the Ministers concerned when you have decided how this is to be resolved. I can then let you have ^{some} suggestions.

- (e) The Longer Term and the 'Forum'. The Chancellor floats a number of suggestions here, which are also touched on in Mr Prior's paper. You yourself have floated the idea of a 'Council of Economic Advisers', but I understand that by this you only mean some relatively informal and infrequent gathering. You may have a clearer idea, from your talks with Mr Murray, of the sort of reception you might expect from the TUC to such proposals.
- (f) Comparability. You asked the Chancellor to include more specific conclusions on this point (para 13 (iv) and (v) do this). May I suggest that any review of comparability should cover not only PRU and the review bodies, but also the future of schedule 11 of the Employment Protection Act and of the Central Arbitration Committee? These last can have quite an important effect on the public sector where there are direct analogies with the private sector (Road Haulages a good example) and make it very difficult to avoid extending 'the going rate' into parts of the nationalised industries.

8. Turning now to the remaining points in Mr Prior's paper which have not been covered above:-

- (g) Procedural changes. Mr Prior plans to bring forward his proposals on industrial relations reform to E in about three weeks. It will be ~~important not to rely too much on these changes to influence the next pay round in the private sector.~~ Even if legislation could be introduced and acted in time, the changes proposed are relatively modest, and will not of themselves greatly influence unions' attitudes. They may have some part to play in weakening the strike weapon, but the more they are seen to be designed for this purpose, the more bitterly they will be resisted by the unions.
- (h) Monitoring and information. Mr Prior suggests that sponsoring Ministers should keep in fairly close touch with the course of public sector negotiations, and that his own Department should continue to monitor pay movements in the private sector. While you will want to avoid any impression of intervention or structured pay policies, I'm sure that both of these proposals are sensible.

CONCLUSIONS

9. Subject to the course of the discussion, I think you may be able to guide the Committee to agree to the five conclusions set out at the end of the Chancellor's paper, and in addition -

- (vi) to invite the Secretary of State for Employment to come forward with his proposals for industrial relations reform as soon as possible; →
- (vii) to agree that sponsored departments should maintain close liaison with public corporations on pay negotiations;
- (viii) to agree that the Department of Employment should continue informal monitoring of private sectors. You may also care to suggest that thought be given to the technical problem of improving the pay forecasts on which cash limits have to be set; and of any changes, eg in the timing of negotiations which would enable greater realism to be achieved.

[Handwritten signature]
for JOHN HUNT

31 May 1979

SRWAAH

- 1. Mr. Addison ✓ Fine. The points on timing have more general application.
- 2. Mr. Norgrove ✓ Agree. DMS 14/13
- 3. Mr. Powell ✓ Excellent. COP 14/13.
- 4. Mr. Wicks ✓ 17th Floor.

I agree. Also, stress more use of side headings, indulations, "i, ii and iii's" help with great assembly. PL prepare note to go into note sendy let views for signature.

CABINET OFFICE BRIEFS

You commissioned me at our meeting recently to consider whether there was any way in which Cabinet Office briefs might be revised in form to provide the Prime Minister with a better service. Since then I have been collecting some examples and reflecting on what we might suggest.

N.C.W.
14-3

Is there a problem?

The only person who can answer this is the Prime Minister and obviously, before we approach Cabinet Office, we will have to put the question as well as any suggestions which we have to her. My experience suggests that for the most part the Prime Minister holds the advice she receives from the Cabinet Office in very high esteem and that she reads the briefs which are put in front of her. This is not, however, to say that there is no room for improvement. It is my impression, particularly on Wednesday nights before Cabinet on Thursday, the Prime Minister feels overwhelmed by the quantity of paper which descends on her. Anything which can be done to ease the flow of business on such days can only be welcome.

Proposals for improvement

(i) Length of briefs. I am sure that this is the principal problem if one exists. Although I am not directly involved in the preparation for Cabinet or Cabinet committees I am often appalled at the length of Cabinet Office briefs which the Prime Minister is expected to read in addition to the paper itself as well as usually a note from the Policy Unit. This might mean that for a single item on the agenda of a meeting

the Prime Minister has to read 30 or more pages of, presumably, densely argued material. There has, moreover, apparently been a tendency for the length of briefs to increase in recent years although it is difficult to gather systematic evidence. I attach for example a brief prepared in 1979 on the major issue of pay which apologises for its length. It is just over 4 pages long. By contrast, I attach a brief for an E(A) meeting on the Channel Fixed Link which runs to 12½ pages. I am not altogether sure why Cabinet Office briefs need to be so long, unless they are intended to be read as a substitute for the paper itself. Inevitably, however, this becomes counter-productive for a number of reasons:

(i) neither the brief nor the paper itself is read with the care that it otherwise would be. Indeed the Policy Unit advice which usually is 2 pages or so is seized on as offering the clearest guide to the issue under discussion;

(ii) the brief is submitted rather late since it not only has to be written, but has to be typed and copied in the Cabinet Office and flagged up, etc, in CF;

(iii) it is of considerably less use to the Prime Minister during the discussion itself.

If the Prime Minister agrees therefore I strongly suggest that we should press Cabinet Office to declare a self-imposed limit of 4 pages for each of their briefs with a possible extension to 6 in unusual circumstances.

(ii) Organisation

I recognise that the organisation of Cabinet Office briefs is hallowed by the passage of time but I have two suggestions. First, that the paragraph on handling is not clearly necessary. The Prime Minister has been at this business for a great deal longer than anybody in the Cabinet Office or the Private Office and she does not need advice on whom to call to

Speak.

Second, it seems to me that it would assist the Prime Minister more to have the "conclusions" section of the brief at the beginning rather than the end of the paper. Obviously this could not then be called conclusions: it might instead be called the purposes of the meeting. Thus organised the brief could then direct itself with more facility to the purpose of the meeting rather than establishing often at extreme length the background to the issue. This would also help the Prime Minister during the course of the meeting since she would have on a piece of paper readily at hand the points which need to be established.

as what should be the outcome.

(iii) Timing

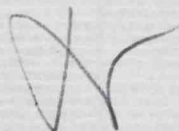
As I have already said, much of the problem with the Prime Minister's workload is not its size but when it happens. The demands of Ministerial diaries have tended to mean that Thursdays have always been loaded very heavily. Since this is also a Questions Day, an immense amount of material goes into the box on Wednesday night. It may be that colleagues in the office already do this but could we not ask if briefs as well as papers might not arrive say on Tuesday night rather than very late on Wednesday night as often seems to be the case. Similarly for meetings on Tuesdays, could we not seek to get briefs in by Friday night so that they can be looked at over the weekend? Obviously this may be the informal practice now but is there any scope for formalising it? It might be difficult to do so if we continue to get 9 or 10 page briefs but with 4 page briefs it might be a possibility.

Where do we go from here?

Depending on the views of recipients of this note on the above suggestions I suggest that we put a note to the Prime Minister seeking her views. If she wishes us to take them up, Mr. Wicks might like to consider an informal rather than a formal approach to Sir Robert Armstrong. I know from talking to Mr. Stark that the general proposition that the length and

Yes, but followed by summary in writing.

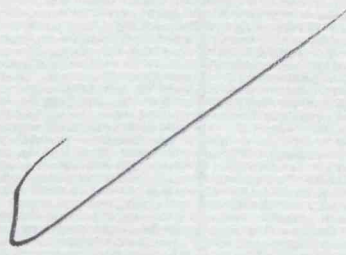
style of Cabinet Office briefs should be looked at would find a receptive audience in at least part of the Cabinet Office.



(TIM FLESHER)
14 March 1986

1. MR. POWELL
2. MR. NORGROVE
3. MR. FLESHER
4. MR. ADDISON

COB 10/3.
DFW 10/3
W 10/3
M 10/3



Thank you for your comments on my minute to Sir Robert Armstrong about Cabinet Office support.

I thought it right, both for reasons of substance and tactics, to welcome Sir Robert's suggestions and have therefore maintained the draft accordingly. Please could I ask that we should, wherever practicable and appropriate, take advantage of his proposals. Of course, this in no way means giving the Cabinet Office "control" over our work. We are in control. They are a resource to be used.

Please let me know if anyone experiences any difficulty with the Cabinet Office in working these arrangements.

N.L.W.

(N.L. WICKS)

10 March 1986



File
SL2 AFK

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Thank you for your note of 25 February.

Both Cabinet and Private Offices start here with the same objective - to do all we properly can to help the Prime Minister. Our task therefore is to mobilise the resources of the two offices to that end.

It is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules for inevitably diverse circumstances, but I think your three suggestions are helpful. They have, I think, particular relevance to business which crosses Departmental boundaries, especially where there is or is likely to be disagreement. So we will aim to invoke the procedures which you suggest in the appropriate cases. For your part, you and your colleagues should feel free to suggest instances where you think they could be invoked. For example, on your first suggestion I hope that your people would let us know quickly when you would wish to offer comment or advice on departmental letters, most of which are, I believe, already copied to your office.

Finally, some obvious words of warning. As you know, the Prime Minister quite rightly does not welcome large meetings, particularly where "support staff" make up the numbers; nor does she like to give any impression of "being taken over by the machine"; and she takes pride in the quick despatch of business at No. 10. We must not give the Prime Minister cause for complaint on any of these grounds.

So let us proceed in this way and review matters in, say, three months time.

N L WICKS

7 March 1986

1. MR. POWELL

EW

2. MR. NORCROVE

DN 7/3

3. MR. FLESHER

I think the first sentence of para 3 should be friendly rather than neutral.

4. MR. ADDISON

I agree with Tim's advice.

Following our meeting earlier this week, I attach the draft of my reply to Robert Armstrong's minute. Please could I have quick comments before I despatch it today.

N.h.W.

Garden House

NLW

PL type

7 March, 1986.

N.

PERSONAL AND IN CONFIDENCE

Slzall

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Thank you for your note of 25 February.

2. Both Cabinet and Private Offices start here with the same objective - to do all we properly can to help the Prime Minister. Our task therefore is to mobilise the resources of the two offices to that end.

3. It is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules for inevitably diverse circumstances, but ^{note} your three suggestions ^{I think} ~~are helpful in that regard.~~ They have, I think, particular relevance to business which crosses Departmental boundaries, especially where there is or is likely to be disagreement. So we will aim to invoke the procedures which you suggest in the appropriate cases. For your part, you and your ^{colleagues} ~~Secretary~~ ^{Deputy} should feel free to suggest ~~to me~~ instances where you think they could be invoked. For example, on your first suggestion I hope that your people would let us know quickly when you would wish to offer comment or advice on departmental letters, most of which are, I believe, already copied to your office.

are helpful.

any
type
PP-3

4. Finally, some obvious words of warning. As you know, the Prime Minister quite rightly does not welcome large meetings, particularly where "support staff" make up the numbers; nor does she like to give any impression of "being taken over by the machine"; and she takes pride in the quick despatch of business at No.10. We must not give the Prime Minister cause for complaint on any of these grounds.

5. So let us proceed in this way and review matters in, say, 3 months time.

NLW



10 DOWNING STREET

Draft

46

From the Principal Private Secretary

Sir Robert Armstrong

Thank you for your note of 25 February.

2. Both Cabinet and Private Offices start here with the same objective - to do all we properly can to help the Prime Minister. Our task therefore is to mobilise the resources of the two offices to that end.

3. ^{but} Your three suggestions are helpful in that regard, and I hope that you and your Deputy Secretaries will feel free to suggest to me instances where you think they could be invoked. For example, on your first suggestion I hope that your people would let us know quickly when you would wish to offer comment or advice on departmental letters, most of which are, I believe, already copied to your office. ^{For your part}

4. ⁴ It is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules for inevitably diverse circumstances. ^{Finally,} But your suggestions ^{They} have, I think, particular relevance to business which crosses Departmental boundaries, especially where there is or is likely to be disagreement. So we will ~~try~~ invoke the procedures which you suggest in the appropriate cases. But ~~x~~ some obvious words of warning. As you know, the Prime Minister quite rightly does not welcome large meetings, particularly where "support staff" make up the numbers; nor does she like to give any impression of "being taken over by the machine"; and she takes pride in the quick despatch of business at No.10. ^{We must not give the Prime Minister cause for complaint on any of these grounds}

5. So let us proceed in this way and review matters in, say, 3 months time.

NLW

6 March, 1986.



Ref. A086/638

MR WICKS

In the light of recent events and discussions I have been considering whether and how the Cabinet Office could do more to help ensure sensible and trouble-free despatch of business. We have (as you know) a small but very effective team of people here, covering the waterfront, and good lines of communication and access to information. I think that we could do more to put this at the disposal of the Prime Minister, and to take some of the heat off the hard-pressed Private Office.

2. I should like to make the following suggestions:

1. 10 Downing Street is justifiably proud of the speed with which responses are sent to minutes and letters from departmental Ministers. Sometimes the speed of the response is dictated by events; at other times nothing would be lost by a delay of, say, twenty four hours which would give an opportunity for one of us to offer quick comment or advice, which could make a significant contribution to the Prime Minister's response. This applies over the whole range of business but particularly in relation to foreign and defence affairs. Indeed we might do well to reconfirm the practice whereby, before a minute or letter from a departmental Minister is put into the Prime Minister, the Private Secretary concerned should check with my office or with the Deputy Secretary concerned to see if we want to offer any comment or advice. There may even be occasions when a letter has not been copied to this office, but you may think that it would be as well to copy it to us yourself and see if we have any comment or advice to suggest.

why?



2. I believe that we could usefully make more contribution than we do to the decisions on handling of issues that need to be discussed collectively. I do not mean that we should urge you to put more business into the Cabinet Committee machinery, though there may be cases in which it is helpful, to protect the Prime Minister's position with her colleagues, either to bring something to an existing Cabinet Committee or to set up a meeting as a "MISC" meeting rather than as a "huddle" in No 10. But even when issues are going to be discussed at ad hoc meetings outside the Cabinet Committee machinery, we may have some knowledge of particular Ministerial or departmental sensitivities which can be useful in deciding when a meeting is to be held and who is to be invited.

3. I think that we could be of more help to the Prime Minister if it was more regularly the practice that we should be represented (by me or by the appropriate Deputy Secretary) at meetings which the Prime Minister holds with small groups of Ministers to discuss particular issues. It happens sometimes (as for instance on the Green Paper on the Reform of Personal Taxation); if it happened more often, we should have more to offer by way of helping with note-taking and by way of subsequent advice on substance or on handling.

3. I should be very ready to discuss these suggestions, and any other possibilities you might have to add, with you.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

25 February 1986



ГОЩЕВ



10 DOWNING STREET

7 February 1986

Dear Louise,

As you know, your department is one of those on which we at No. 10 make very considerable demands for briefing for Prime Minister's questions, often on a wide variety of matters within your department's responsibilities. Given your geography there have occasionally been difficulties in the past in getting this briefing to us in reasonable time. In recent months, however, the briefing which you provide has arrived with admirable promptness and in a form which makes our lives very much easier. I am writing therefore to express our heartfelt thanks for all the help you give us and to apologise in advance for all the unreasonable demands we will make on you before the end of the Session!

Yours
Tim

Tim Flesher

Louise Maderson



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

MR. MALLABY
CABINET OFFICE

BRIEFING FOR THE PRIME MINISTER


Thank you for your minute of 21 January about the format of the briefs for the Prime Minister's meeting with foreign visitors and for international meetings.

I suppose that there is no single format which meets all the Prime Minister's requirements for all occasions. To the best of my knowledge, she is perfectly content with the present format, though it has to be said that her inclination when presented with a document is to read and absorb it regardless of its shape or the colour of the paper. The use she makes of the briefs depends on her familiarity with the issues, the amount of time which she has to prepare for the meeting and the sort of discussion which she wants to have. There are times when improbable briefs for visitors from improbable countries are scanned eagerly from beginning to end: and others when the Prime Minister's grasp of the issues is clearly well ahead of those who have written the briefs, and their worth is consequently of no great value. I should add that I normally dictate a two page covering note setting out what she might try to achieve from the meeting, and what impact she wants to make on the visitor. Quite often this is all that she has time to read. There have also been times when voluminous briefs for major meetings, e.g. CHOGM or European Councils, have remained virtually unused. But one can never be sure: and the worst sin is not to have provided the required information.

My inclination therefore is to stick to the present format for bilateral meetings at least. I would only suggest that our arguments, their arguments and our replies might be on separate sheets. There is still a way to go to achieve a really lean and crisp presentation of facts in background briefs.

I agree with you that briefs for multilateral meetings can be simplified in the way you suggest. You will want to bear in mind that for European Councils the Prime Minister quite often finds it useful to have full speaking notes on the major issues.

C. D. Powell
28 January 1986



IN CONFIDENCE

B.07285

MR POWELL

c Mr Stark

Briefing for the Prime Minister

The present arrangements for briefing the Prime Minister for bilateral and multilateral meetings were set out in Sir Robert Armstrong's letter of 12 February 1985 to Sir Antony Acland. It was then envisaged that we would review the arrangements last summer, to see how far they met the Prime Minister's requirements. We have in the event let them run on a few months longer in order to give them a fairer trial and to include a Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting.

2. Our impression is that, once Departments had become familiar with them, the arrangements have worked pretty well for short bilateral meetings, but have proved a bit cumbersome for the major European Summits and for multilateral meetings such as CHOGM and the Economic Summit. Some of the arrangements may need simplifying to ensure that the Departments know exactly what is required of them, and to ensure that the Prime Minister is briefed as effectively as possible, and is not burdened with unnecessary paper. We shall need to consider, for example, whether in any revised guidelines we should distinguish more clearly between bilateral and multilateral meetings.

3. Before we ask Departments for their views, I should be grateful for a general steer from you on how well the arrangements have suited the Prime Minister, and on any particular changes you would like us to consider. We shall, of course, put any proposed changes to you for consideration after Departments have contributed.



IN CONFIDENCE

4. I should mention one point now, since it has operational implications in the near term. The arrangement of providing the Prime Minister only with a (slightly expanded) steering brief for all subjects including Community ones and a brief for handling the plenary discussion, doing away with separate subject briefs for her, seemed to work well for the recent Anglo-German Summit. Unless you see objection, we would propose to follow this pattern at least for the Anglo-Italian Summit scheduled for 12 March. We would also like to consider its adoption for all bilateral Summits with France, the Federal Republic and Italy, although an occasional need would no doubt remain for a special brief on an unfamiliar or very complex subject. (A permanent arrangement of this kind would of course require some changes in the present arrangements for commissioning briefs.)

C L G Mallaby

21 January 1986



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

17 April 1985

**GUIDELINES FOR DRAFTING SPEECHES
FOR THE PRIME MINISTER**

Recent experience with the drafting of speeches for the Prime Minister's visit to South-East Asia suggests that guidelines for those working on drafts would be useful.

I enclose some.

Charles Powell

Sherard Cowper-Cowles, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

5

GUIDELINES FOR DRAFTING SPEECHES FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

1. The speech should have a central idea of theme. It should be a real and coherent theme, not a shopping list e.g. challenges to freedom.
2. The theme should be intellectually interesting and likely to have a political impact.
3. The speech should aim at intellectual depth.
4. It should have a clear structure.
5. A philosophical/reflective passage will usually be welcome.
6. So will literary quotations or historical or local references, especially where particularly appropriate to the audience or occasion.
7. Sentences should be short. Often a sentence of just three or four words can be effective.
8. Rhythm is important - and can only be got right by speaking the speech.
9. Avoid
 - (a) repetition

This requires really ruthless excision at the drafting stage.
 - (b) diplomatic jargon

All references to "friendly relations in various fields", "strengthening the bonds between our two countries" etc. to be cut out.

(c) catalogues

i.e. mere lists of things we are doing or think should be done.

(d) phrases such as "Now let me turn to", "I come next to" or "I now wish to consider". Don't describe what the speaker is going to do. Just do it.

c- Miss Bowdery


 cc- Mr Cartledge
 Miss Lambert
 Mr Powell (No. 10)
 Sir R Nicholson
 COLIC
8

70 WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

01-233 8319 27319

c- Duty Clerk (lan)

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref. A085/476

12 February 1985

Briefing for the Prime Minister

At our meeting on Friday 25 January with Robin Butler and Charles Powell, we discussed ways of improving the briefing for the Prime Minister at bilateral and multilateral summit meetings. We agreed that, while it was impossible to invent the perfect briefing system, the present system should be modified to take account of the fact that the Prime Minister and other senior Ministers have been so long in office and know the issues so well. Taking into account the points made at our meeting, and in particular the proposals put to us by Charles Powell, I suggest that we might in future aim to arrange the briefing along the following lines.

As regards the general drafting of briefs, we noted that the Prime Minister wanted briefing which concentrated on specific, concrete objectives, and which was set out in annotated rather than narrative form. In particular, after six years in office, she is familiar with much of the background and does not need verbatim speaking notes. Instead of "points to make" or "speaking notes", briefs should list the arguments to be deployed in support of our objectives, including tactical arguments which could be used if necessary to put the other side on the defensive.

On the format of the briefing, we need to distinguish between three types of international meeting:

/i. the short

Sir Antony Acland KCMG KCVO

- i. the short (ie less than half a day) talk with another Head of Government or other overseas visitor, usually tete-a-tete or with Foreign Ministers and a few officials only present;
- ii. the full-scale Prime Ministerial visit (inward or outward) with or without the participation of other Ministers; together with major bilateral summits (on the Anglo-French or Anglo-German pattern) at which the Prime Minister leads a team of Ministerial colleagues; and
- iii. multilateral meetings of Heads of Government.

Short Bilateral Meetings

The proposals put forward by Charles Powell (annexed to this letter) are essentially designed for this sort of bilateral meeting, for which the briefing is at present normally supplied by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the form of a single or a very restricted number of briefs cleared as necessary with other Departments. You agreed that, for future such meetings, the briefing should follow the new format. I hope that it will normally be possible for there to be a single brief covering all the subjects likely to be raised, with any necessary detailed background in annexes.

Full-scale Prime Ministerial Visits and Major Bilateral Summits

It is more difficult to apply this format to briefing for Prime Ministerial visits and major bilateral summits, given that the briefing may have to serve Ministers other than the Prime Minister (and senior officials), and will normally need to cover a larger number of subjects. We agreed that it would not be sensible to prepare different sets of briefs on the same subjects for different Ministers attending summits. Bearing this in mind, I suggest that the present system could be modified as follows:

- a. The scene-setting letter which you send me about a month before the summit, copied to Permanent Secretaries in other Whitehall Departments, should continue. It should, however, concentrate on setting out more clearly United Kingdom objectives and the objectives and subjects likely to be raised by the other side - information on the latter to be based on whatever our post is able to glean from the other Government. There should also be a clear distinction between major and minor objectives - one of the criticisms of the old "objectives" letter which preceded the "scene-setting" letter was that no distinction was made between major objectives such as reforming the Community budget and minor bilateral problems.
- b. A proposed list of briefs should be, as at present, circulated with the scene-setting letter. This list should relate clearly to the objectives set out in the letter and should include only subjects likely to be raised substantively at Head of Government level. The list should be cleared in advance with the OD and European Secretariats of the Cabinet Office. My office will then, again as at present, issue a commissioning letter with the list of

/briefs,

briefs, revised if necessary to take into account any comments received from Departments in reply to the scene-setting letter.

c. The steering brief - as I think we might go back to calling the "general brief" - will be the vital brief, and should be drafted in such a way that the Prime Minister need not read any of the other briefs, although they will be available for consultation if required. For summits with Community countries there will also be a separate steering brief covering Community matters. For the main subjects likely to come up at Head of Government level, the steering brief should be cast in the format set out in the annex to this letter, excluding the press line. All the more minor subjects which are unlikely to be more than briefly touched upon at Head of Government level - eg at the reports on the bilateral in the plenary - should be covered, as at present, in a separate section at the end headed "Other Subjects Which May Be Raised". In this section, each subject should be covered in a single paragraph setting out pithily which side may raise it and what each side's objectives are. As the steering brief is the most important brief, it should in the case of the major Western European summits be cleared (as at present) through Bryan Cartledge's MISC 76 Committee and it may occasionally be worthwhile to set up similar ad hoc arrangements for other important summits (eg Anglo-American).

d. Subject briefs should as at present be restricted to subjects likely to come up substantively at Head of Government level. Departments should, again as at present, provide their own Ministers with separate briefing on subjects only likely to come up substantively at their own tete-a-tetes with their opposite numbers. The individual subject briefs for the Prime Minister should normally need to do no more than set out the background on the subject in question, the objectives and arguments will have been included in the steering brief.

Multilateral Summits

For European Councils, Economic Summits and Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings, the briefing should as far as possible follow a similar pattern to that for full-scale bilateral summits. The steering brief should follow the format set out in the annex for the main subjects on the agenda, and then have a separate section with brief paragraphs on the more minor subjects which may come up. The steering brief will also need a further section listing any bilaterals in the margins of the main meeting and describing briefly the objectives for each. As in the case of bilateral summit steering briefs, the steering brief for multilateral summits will normally need to be looked at by a Cabinet Office Committee - EQS in the case of the European Council Steering brief.

For the longer and more complicated multilateral summit meeting - especially the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting - there will probably need to be rather more subject briefs. For instance, most if not all the subjects mentioned in the steering brief under "Other Subjects Which May Be Raised"

/will probably

RESTRICTED

will probably need their own subject brief, as if they do come up they may do so in some detail, and it will be less easy than at bilateral summits for the Prime Minister to remit discussion to other Ministers if she feels that the subject is inappropriate for discussion at her level. For the main subject on the agenda, on which objectives and arguments will have been included in the steering brief, the subject brief should need to be no more than a background brief. For other subjects, the individual briefs may need to contain objectives and arguments. There will also need to be separate briefs for the individual bilaterals. These should follow the format at Annex. Finally, I propose that we should take stock of these arrangements in about July to see whether they are in fact meeting the Prime Minister's needs. By then we shall have had the experience of two European Councils, the Economic Summit and various bilateral meetings to go on.

I am sending copies of this letter to Permanent Secretaries in charge of Departments.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

BRIEFS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETINGS
WITH FOREIGN HEADS OF GOVERNMENTS AND MINISTERS

Briefs should be set out under six headings as follows:

(i) Our objectives

This should set out pithily what we want to achieve from the meeting. The objectives should be expressed as specifically as possible (ie not just goodwill and harmony). If none can be identified, it will have been a waste of time to ask the Prime Minister to have the meeting.

(ii) Arguments to use

This should list arguments which can be used to get our way. They should be related specifically to the goals and not be "the world would be a better place if ..." sort of argument.

(iii) Tactical arguments

These will be arguments designed to highlight the weak points in the other side's policies (not necessarily those related to the specific questions being discussed). Inclusion in the brief does not mean that the arguments will necessarily be used: only that the Prime Minister will have the option of using them if the discussion takes a particular turn.

(iv) Their objectives

This will set out our estimate of what the other side expects to get out of the meeting and the specific points which they are likely to raise. It will be based on contacts which our Embassy will have had beforehand with the other Government.

How the Prime Minister should reply to points which they will raise.

(vi) Press Line

What we hope to be able to say to the press afterwards. Obviously this may need to be modified, depending on how the meeting goes.

Background should be attached to the main brief. It should be a staccato summary of relevant facts and dates and not a narrative. It should mention the last occasion when the Prime Minister met the visitor in question.

A mock-up brief is attached.

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF TRANSYLVANIA

Our Objectives

To persuade the President:

- (a) to order BAe Trainer Aircraft for the Transylvanian Air Force
- (b) to maintain Transylvania's abstention on the Falklands at the UN
- (c) to explain why we cannot change our policy on student grants.

Arguments

- (a) the BAe Trainer has been bought by X countries including neighbouring Lusitania and Carpentia: is 15% cheaper than the French competitor: might enable us to take back aging Hunters as part of the deal.
- (b) the arguments will be well-known to the Prime Minister.
- (c) pressure on public expenditure: anyway 50 scholarships reserved for Transylvanians: ready to discuss use of higher proportion of our aid programme for student grants.

Tactical Arguments

Attention can be drawn to Transylvania's human rights record and the forthcoming vote at the X Committee of the UN, on which our position has not been decided.

s Objectives

- (a) our support for preferential access for Transylvanian cowpeas to the EEC.
- (b) extradition to Transylvania of the leader of the outlawed Transylvanian Liberation Front (TLF).
- (c) to persuade the Prime Minister to visit Transylvania.

Your Response

- (a) they have our full support but unfortunately the French and Italians are blocking. They should make representations in Paris and Rome.
- (b) he has been granted asylum in Britain and under our legal procedures cannot be extradited.
- (c) accept in principle but not yet possible to fix a date.

Press Line

[See FCO model]

Background

Prime Minister last met the President at the UN in October 1982.

2. BAe offering aircraft at £1m each with credit at 9% over 15 years.

3. The French and Italians argue that cowpeas compete with their horsebeans, are unlikely to budge and cannot be outvoted.

4. PM's travel programme full until late 1986.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

MR. HATFIELD

BRIEFING FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS MEETINGS

We are to discuss this afternoon how briefing for foreign affairs' meetings might be tailored more closely to the Prime Minister's requirements. I have tried my hand at devising a format which would do this. I enclose a copy which might serve as a basis for discussion. I have confirmed that something on these lines would suit the Prime Minister well, though it is not meant to be an exclusive model.

I am copying this minute to Mr. Jay in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

(C.D. POWELL)
25 January 1985

76
c. [Signature]

CJP
- 25/1

PRIME MINISTER

BRIEFING

You observed the other day that you found a good deal of FCO and other Whitehall briefing for meetings with other Heads of Government stodgy, long-winded and repetitive (or words to that effect).

I am having a meeting later this week with Robert Armstrong and Antony Acland to consider how it might be improved.

I attach a suggestion for a revised format for briefs for your meetings, together with a mock-up. - *An absolute gem - I loved reading it.*

Would something on these lines meet what you want?

Yes - wonderful

mb

CJP.

23 January 1985

BRIEFS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETINGS
WITH FOREIGN HEADS OF GOVERNMENTS AND MINISTERS

Briefs should be set out under six headings as follows:

(i) Our objectives

This should set out pithily what we want to achieve from the meeting. The objectives should be expressed as specifically as possible (ie not just goodwill and harmony). If none can be identified, it will have been a waste of time to ask the Prime Minister to have the meeting.

(ii) Arguments to use

This should list arguments which can be used to get our way. They should be related specifically to the goals and not be "the world would be a better place if ..." sort of argument.

(iii) Tactical arguments

These will be arguments designed to highlight the weak points in the other side's policies (not necessarily those related to the specific questions being discussed). Inclusion in the brief does not mean that the arguments will necessarily be used: only that the Prime Minister will have the option of using them if the discussion takes a particular turn.

(iv) Their objectives

This will set out our estimate of what the other side expects to get out of the meeting and the specific points which they are likely to raise. It will be based on contacts which our Embassy will have had beforehand with the other Government.

(v) Our response

How the Prime Minister should reply to points which they will raise.

(vi) Press Line

What we hope to be able to say to the press afterwards. Obviously this may need to be modified, depending on how the meeting goes.

Background should be attached to the main brief. It should be a staccato summary of relevant facts and dates and not a narrative. It should mention the last occasion when the Prime Minister met the visitor in question.

A mock-up brief is attached.

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF TRANSYLVANIA

Our Objectives

To persuade the President:

- (a) to order BAe Trainer Aircraft for the Transylvanian Air Force
- (b) to maintain Transylvania's abstention on the Falklands at the UN
- (c) to explain why we cannot change our policy on student grants.

Arguments

- (a) the BAe Trainer has been bought by X countries including neighbouring Lusitania and Carpentia: is 15% cheaper than the French competitor: might enable us to take back aging Hunters as part of the deal.
- (b) the arguments will be well-known to the Prime Minister.
- (c) pressure on public expenditure: anyway 50 scholarships reserved for Transylvanians: ready to discuss use of higher proportion of our aid programme for student grants.

Tactical Arguments

Attention can be drawn to Transylvania's human rights record and the forthcoming vote at the X Committee of the UN, on which our position has not been decided.

His Objectives

- (a) our support for preferential access for Transylvanian cowpeas to the EEC.
- (b) extradition to Transylvania of the leader of the outlawed Transylvanian Liberation Front (TLF).
- (c) to persuade the Prime Minister to visit Transylvania.

Your Response

- (a) they have our full support but unfortunately the French and Italians are blocking. They should make representataions in Paris and Rome.
- (b) he has been granted asylum in Britain and under our legal procedures cannot be extradited.
- (c) accept in principle but not yet possible to fix a date.

Press Line

[See FCO model]

Background

Prime Minister last met the President at the UN in October 1982.

2. BAe offering aircraft at £1m each with credit at 9% over 15 years.

3. The French and Italians argue that cowpeas compete with their horsebeans, are unlikely to budge and cannot be outvoted.

4. PM's travel programme full until late 1986.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

17 January 1985

R P Hatfield Esq

CABINET OFFICE

Dear Richard,

BRIEFING FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

1. You have arranged for Sir Robert Armstrong, Sir Antony Acland and Charles Powell to meet next week to discuss the Prime Minister's concerns, as recently expressed to Sir Antony, about arrangements for briefing her for important meetings and overseas visits. The background to this is that the Prime Minister told Sir Antony recently that she found a great deal of FCO (and other Whitehall) briefing stodgy, long-winded and repetitive. She said that briefing meetings for bilateral Summits and European Councils were usually of limited usefulness.

2. The Prime Minister made the following suggestions for improving matters:

- (i) In advance of any major bilateral meeting involving her, our post, concerned should obtain a clear picture of the particular points which the other Government intended to raise. It was not enough just to have a list of headings, eg East-West, European Community. We must know the specific points within those subjects on which they intended to speak.
- (ii) Written briefing should set out much more precisely specific UK objectives from the meeting in question. It should focus on these objectives and on any new points which we knew that the other side were going to raise. There was no need, at least in briefs for her, to recycle basic information;
- (iii) Briefing should include points designed to put the other party on the defensive, to be deployed when tactically appropriate.
- (iv) Briefing meetings where needed should be smaller and more purposeful, concentrating on identifying specific UK objectives and how to obtain them.



PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

3. Sir Antony Acland suggests that these points, along with others which Sir Robert Armstrong or Charles Powell may have, might be discussed at next week's meeting.

Yours ever,

Michael

M H Jay

cc: Mr Powell

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

R. R.

C. Mr. Sherbourne

Mr. Powell
Mr. Ironbult
Mr. Flester
Mr. Barclay

} Pl. note.
I think this
is a good,
indeed necessary,
idea.

MR. BUTLER

I think Michael Alison and I would find it helpful if we could have sight of the Prime Minister's official speeches during their drafting stages - not that we want to get more involved than necessary!! - but it would be helpful just in case we have any particular point we want to feed in.

As you know I always send copies of drafts of political speeches to the Private Office when they are not directly involved.

SS

STEPHEN SHERBOURNE

30.11.84

CONFIDENTIAL

CCP



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

9 October, 1984

MD. 9/K

Dear Bryan,

Briefing the Prime Minister

Thank you for your letter of 2 October asking us to let the Cabinet Office have, as a matter of routine, copies of briefing material which we send No 10 for meetings between the Prime Minister and overseas visitors. There may be a few occasions on which the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary would prefer his advice to the Prime Minister to be private, but subject to that proviso we can agree to your proposal, and shall make sure that copies of briefs for No 10 are in future sent also to Sir Robert Armstrong.

I am copying this letter to Charles Powell.

Yours ever,

Len Appleyard

(L V Appleyard)
Private Secretary

Brian Cartledge Esq CMG
Cabinet Office

PM June '29

Requests for Breeding



■ OCT 1984



Seen by CSR

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8378

CONFIDENTIAL

B.06845

2 October 1984

Dear Len,

Briefing the Prime Minister

It is helpful to our work in the OD Secretariat to know what topics are likely to be raised in discussions between the Prime Minister and overseas visitors, both in order to correctly interpret subsequent references to the discussions in Cabinet and Cabinet Committee meetings and also to be aware in advance of possible requirements for follow-up.

As you know, we are already involved as a matter of course in the briefing arrangements for the major Summit meetings. I think it would be very helpful if we could also be kept informed, as a matter of routine, of the recommendations which the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary may put to the Prime Minister concerning other meetings with Heads of Government and prominent overseas visitors. The recent visit of the Prime Minister of New Zealand in which we were not, under existing arrangements, involved, is a typical case in point.

If you see no objection, therefore, I should be grateful if you could arrange for copies to be sent to us, as a matter of course, of briefing material for the Prime Minister's meetings with visiting Heads of Government and other visitors of similar calibre at the same time as it is sent across to No 10; this will ensure that we are kept abreast of events without the need to make last minute requests for information ad hoc.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Charles Powell.

Yours ever,

Bryan

B G Cartledge

L V Appleyard Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth
Office
S W 1

CONFIDENTIAL

PM.

CONFIDENTIAL

X 01821

MR GOODALL

cc Mr Hancock
Mr Stapleton
Mr Facer
Mr Hatfield
Mr Coles, No 10 (for personal information) ✓

A.J.C. $\frac{7}{2}$
h-a.

BRIEFING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUMMIT MEETINGS

- As promised in the last paragraph of Mr Hancock's minute of today's date, I attach a schedule comparing the present procedure with that proposed in his minute. The schedule also includes some other possible changes which I think it would be useful to make.

Sophia Lambert ✓

SOPHIA LAMBERT

2 February 1983

CONFIDENTIAL

BRIEFING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUMMIT MEETINGS

TIMETABLE

PRESENT SYSTEM

PROPOSED NEW SYSTEM

7-8 weeks before

FCO Private Secretary sends letter to No 10 making proposals on Ministerial participation (and the programme if Summit is in UK).

No change.

4-5 weeks before

PUS in FCO sends "objectives" letter to Sir R Armstrong, copied to other Permanent Secretaries; this letter contains general scene-setting steer and encloses lists of objectives of both sides and a proposed list of briefs.

The "objectives" letter should become a "scene-setting" letter, similar to the present one but omitting the list of objectives (where appropriate the text of the letter can describe in broad terms the objectives of both sides). The letter should as at present enclose a suggested list of briefs.

Cabinet Office submits FCO letter to No 10 for approval. Usually No 10 makes few changes - sometimes they add to the list of briefs.

No change.

When No 10 approval is given, Cabinet Office notifies Departments and tells them to go ahead with drafting briefs.

No change.

3 weeks before

FCO drafts steering brief, covering scene-setting; broad objectives of both sides; strategy and tactics; and programme.

Steering brief should be transformed into a "cover-note", ie a general introductory brief covering much the same ground as the present steering brief but describing strategy and tactics in very broad terms only.

2-3 weeks before

FCO sends draft steering brief to Cabinet Office and other Departments, asking for comments. Sometimes a meeting of HODs discusses it; usually however comments are given in writing.

When draft cover-note is sent to the Cabinet Office, the latter should organise an interdepartmental meeting (possibly under Mr Goodall's chairmanship) to discuss it.

1-2 weeks before

Briefs (including steering brief) are submitted to No 10 (usually on the Friday before the weekend before the PM's briefing meeting).

Briefs should be submitted to No 10 accompanied by cover-note. If possible, deadline for submission to No 10 should be put back to eg 2 days before PM's briefing meeting, so as to avoid or improve present situation in which a large number of briefs are usually out-of-date by the time of the briefing meeting (let alone the Summit itself), necessitating the issue of revises.

<u>TIMETABLE</u>	<u>PRESENT SYSTEM</u>	<u>PROPOSED NEW SYSTEM</u>
2-5 days before	PM's briefing meeting.	Format of subject briefs to be changed so that each brief contains, before the "talking points", a very brief paragraph setting out the UK objective or objectives (ie as is now done for European Council briefs). 1 day before PM's briefing meeting, a draft "game-plan" should be circulated (either by FCO or Cabinet Office) to serve as the focus for the briefing meeting.
2-3 days before	Post sends scene-setting telegram.	"Game-plan" is then finalised (perhaps by Cabinet Office) after briefing meeting. Post to send scene-setting telegram to arrive immediately before PM's briefing meeting. Scene-setting telegram to include details of other side's objectives set out in sharp and practical terms.

Qz 03000

MR GOODALL

cc Mr Facer
 Mr Stapleton
 Miss Lambert
 Mr Hatfield
 ✓ Mr Coles (No. 10, for personal information)

A. J. C. 2/2

h-a-

BRIEFING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUMMIT MEETINGS

1. The tone of Sir Julian Bullard's letter of 31 January is welcome; but I see the need to pin him down a bit more if possible.
2. If it is true, as Sir J Bullard says in his paragraph 3, that the statements of the objectives of the other side are already written by the posts, then we shall clearly not improve them simply by asking the posts to put their work into a telegram. We must get posts to change their ideas about what constitutes an objective which is not the same as an agenda item. It is not helpful to say that an Italian objective is to "discuss the Arab/Israel problem" - to quote a recent example. Their true objective must surely be to get us to change our policy or to find out something that they do not know. Blandness is an obstacle to thought.
3. Perhaps we should send posts an example as a guide for the future. Kohl's objectives for his visit on Friday night, I suppose, be:-
 - (i) to be seen by the German electorate as a world figure, like Schmidt, just before his election;
 - (ii) to get our Prime Minister to endorse his INF policy in her statement to the press afterwards; and
 - (iii) to get her agreement to help him restrain French protectionist pressures.

4. So far as Sir Julian Bullard's paragraph 4 is concerned, I think the best answer is to aim for three documents as follows:-

- (i) a scene-setting letter replacing the notorious "objectives letter" to guide those writing the briefs;
- (ii) a cover note for the briefs when they go in to No. 10;
- (iii) most important, the "game plan", or what I would call a "steering brief", which should be circulated, as Mr Coles suggested, in draft before the Prime Minister's briefing meeting to serve as the focus for that occasion, and then revised to serve as a guide at the bilateral meeting itself. The game plan should, in my view, focus sharply on what practical results the Prime Minister should aim to get from the meeting expressed in terms, for example, of changing the views of the other leader on a limited number of important points; getting agreed statements to the press (or at least a statement which the other leader does not contradict); and any more formal agreements if they were intended. The game plan could also include "suggestions for handling" the meeting (a more credible title than "strategy and tactics").

5. Our experience on the Community side of the house is that FCO briefs (even when drafted by the European Community Departments, who are in my view far better at it than the Western European Department) need to be discussed with representatives of the other policy departments if they are to be really useful. We follow this procedure with the Community steering briefs for bilaterals (or the Community passage in the general steering brief if there is no separate Community brief) and the steering brief for the meetings of the European Council.

6. I suggest that, as part of the process of improving the procedures, the cover note (ie paragraph 4(ii) above) should be discussed at an interdepartmental meeting under your chairmanship. I would continue to follow the procedures for clearing the Community steering briefs because they seem to me to work well.

7. Sir Robert Armstrong would then be able to decide whether or not to arrange a discussion with Sir Antony Acland to discuss the draft game plan.

8. Miss Lambert will be sending you a schedule comparing the present procedure with the one proposed in this minute - plus a few more suggestions of her own.

D.H.

2 February 1983.

D J S Hancock

~~Mr. C. S.~~



CABINET OFFICE

With the compliments of

A.J.C. 2/2

W/100-

Mr. Goodall

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS

Telephone 01 233

CONFIDENTIAL



cc. Mr Hancock
Mr Facer
Mr Hatfield
Mr Giles (No. 10) (for info)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

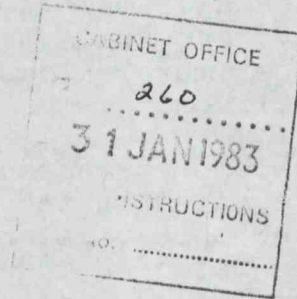
London SW1A 2AH

31 January 1983

*These comments seem
sensible to me. Any other?*

A D S Goodall Esq CMG
CABINET OFFICE

31/1



My dear David,

BRIEFING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUMMIT MEETINGS

1. You made some suggestions on this subject on 24 January, and I told you on the telephone that I would be letting you have our comments.
2. We recognise the imperfections of the present system and would like to cooperate to the full in any improvements that can be devised. But we think it worthwhile taking a little time to think over the various possibilities, and for this reason it did not seem feasible to introduce a new system in time for the Prime Minister's meeting with Chancellor Kohl on 4 February. The briefing for that event has therefore gone ahead on the existing basis, though taking account of the thinking which evidently lies behind your suggestions.
3. We think it a very good idea to institutionalise and raise the status of the scene-setting telegram from the post. I think that ideally this should (a) comprise standard elements, which could certainly include a sketch of the presumed objectives of the other side - which in practice have incidentally nearly always been drafted by the post rather than in the FCO, (b) arrive a fixed number of days before the summit meeting and (c) be slotted into the written briefs at a fixed point, which could be either Part II of the steering brief (as you suggest) or Annex A to it. All this merely requires a circular instruction to posts, starting with those involved in events already on the calendar. I would favour doing this now, whatever may be decided on your other points.
4. As to your suggested Game Plan, I agree that it would be useful to consider, just before the summit takes place, what are the precise as opposed to the general objectives of the British side, and what scope for trade-offs may exist. But I am not sure about the wisdom of leaving this work entirely to the last minute, if this means that the whole of Part I of the steering brief, as you envisage it, would be written only after the Prime Minister's briefing meeting. At present the steering brief provides a focus for this meeting, even if the line of it is not always followed, and its preparation and circulation by

/the

CONFIDENTIAL



the FCO to the Cabinet Office and other Departments does help to establish a framework within which the individual briefs are written. My enquiries on this point show that this preliminary work has been more extensive and more valuable than I and perhaps you had realised.

5. A possible arrangement, which you might like to consider, would be to maintain the existing steering brief, although with an ever more vigilant eye to the purposes which it has always been intended to serve, but to add to this the kind of last-minute 'Game Plan' which you have in mind. The latter should be prepared, as you suggest, in consultation between the Secretary to the Cabinet and the PUS here, after the briefing meeting but in time to be circulated and digested before the summit itself, which means that the interval between the two would need to be adequate.

6. There is some feeling here that the UK objectives would not need to be set out in an Annex, as they are now, if the steering brief described them as it usually also does,

7. For the sake of completeness perhaps I could recall that there have been and would continue to be summit meetings which do not merit the full-dress treatment involving the Cabinet Office. Any 'Game Plan' for these lesser summits would be built in to the more limited briefing that would continue to be provided for events of this kind.

8. I am grateful to you for putting your finger on a problem which has been troubling some of us for a long time, and for making such constructive suggestions.

*Yours ever
Julian*

J L Bullard



PM-
dc 80
WO
fle kb

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

12 January 1983

Thank you for your letter of 17 December about the briefing you prepare for the Prime Minister on Oral Questions which ask her when she will be visiting a particular part of the United Kingdom.

I have consulted the Prime Minister, and she agrees that much of the constituency briefing provided for Question Time is needlessly detailed. She would be quite content with briefing covering only:-

- (a) Major items of "good news" in the constituency or the place referred to in the Question (such as major contracts signed by local firms or new industrial projects which will employ significant numbers of people);
- (b) major items of "bad news" (such as large factory closures); and
- (c) any particular matters known to be of concern to the MP who has put down the Question.

This guidance also applies to the constituency briefing supplied by the Department of Industry as a matter of course covering the interests of Opposition Members who have Questions among the first five for Oral Answer by the Prime Minister. I am therefore copying this letter to Jonathan Spencer so that he can pass on this guidance to the Regional Offices of the Department of Industry.

W. F. S. RICKETT

Mrs. Helen Ghosh,
Department of the Environment.

SB

Prime Minister



I have a lot of sympathy with this. Much of the constituency briefing provided for question time is too detailed, and is a waste of your time. Agree that I should ask DOE and DT/Industry to provide briefing covering only

- (a) major items of good news -
- (b) major items of bad news -
- (c) any particular matters known to be of concern to the constituency not ?

2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

17 December 1982

Agreed with

WR 4/1/83

Dear Willie,

As you will be aware, this Department - and in particular our Regional Planning Division - are responsible for coordinating briefing on questions to the Prime Minister of the "When does the Prime Minister next expect to visit X" variety.

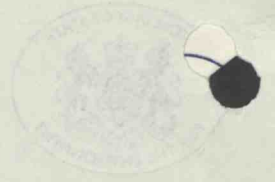
Officials here have asked me to enquire whether the enormous effort which goes into compiling these briefs is matched by their usefulness to the Prime Minister. In many cases, I imagine, the Question is a peg on which to hang a general supplementary question which may have little or nothing to do with place X, or is one which has to be referred to the colleague responsible.

I would be grateful for your views on whether the Prime Minister would wish us to continue to supply briefing in this format or whether we might consider some alternative.

Yours sincerely,
Helen Ghosh

MRS H F GHOSH
Private Secretary

2 MARKHAM STREET
LONDON W1R 2EJ



20 JUL 1982

11 12 3 4
10 9 8 7 6 5

COMPANY

~~Mr. Whitmore~~

~~Mr. Alexander~~

~~Mr. Lankester~~

~~Mr. Sanders~~

~~Mr. Pattison~~

~~Mr. Peterson~~

~~Miss Stephens~~

PM



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

I have shown the Prime Minister your minute A05964 of 12 November 1981 about the submission of Cabinet Office briefing to the Prime Minister, and as she told you when you were here to discuss forthcoming business this morning, she is content for you to proceed as you propose.

C. A. WHITMORE

13 November 1981

52
Ref. A05964

MR. WHITMORE



1.
Prime Minister.
This proposed delegation seems
sensible to me. Are you content?

Yes not

RM
12.11

I should like to use the occasion of the reorganisation at the centre, and the addition it will mean to my own responsibilities, to make a change in practice which I have long believed would be sensible in its own right.

2. If the Prime Minister has no objection, I should like to tell Deputy Secretaries in the Cabinet Office in future to submit direct to her, with copies to me, Cabinet Office briefs for items on the agenda for the Ministerial Committee on Economic Strategy (E), that Committee's Sub-Committee on Nationalised Industries (E(NI)), the Ministerial Committee on Defence and Oversea Policy (OD), and the Ministerial Committee on Exports (EX), save where they are asked to submit a draft to me, for consideration and amendment as necessary before it is put up, or they themselves think that it should come through me.

3. I will ask them to submit briefs in time to give me a chance to see the copies and send a supplementary comment if I see a need to do so. This should be no great hardship, since they already have to prepare draft briefs in time for them to be approved by me and typed fair for submission to the Prime Minister.

4. As for requests from No. 10 for advice ad hoc, I should be grateful if you would continue to direct those all to my office; I can then decide whether I wish to submit advice myself, or to ask one of the Deputy Secretaries to do so direct, copy to me.

RTA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

12th November, 1981

4 August 1980

Briefing on major disputes

The Prime Minister reads with some attention the briefing on major disputes which your Department supplies on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I should therefore be grateful if you could arrange for it to continue to be prepared during the Recess. It would be helpful if we could have a copy of the brief once a week, perhaps on Friday afternoons. The normal twice weekly service should be resumed from the week beginning 27 October, when the House goes back.

N.J. SANDERS

Richard Dykes, Esq.,
Department of Employment.

HJ



VLS
Prime Minister
cc. AS master set.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

14 July 1980

Dear Private Secretary

Statements and Announcements: Procedure for Clearance

Over the next four weeks we anticipate that there will be a large number of important announcements of Government policy, some of which will be made by oral statement and some by written answer. May I ask you all to look again at paragraphs 95 and 96 of "Questions of Procedure for Ministers", which lay down a detailed procedure for seeking and obtaining clearance for making such announcements. It is essential that all of those rules should be strictly observed if we are to avoid confusion and difficulty.

All of the steps set out in "Questions of Procedure" are important, but I should like to emphasise some which have given rise to problems in the last few weeks:

- (a) Paragraphs 95 and 96 list those who should be consulted before an announcement is made. I would draw your attention particularly to the need to give early notice to the Paymaster General, and to give separate notice to the Private Secretary and the Press Secretary at No. 10; in all but exceptional circumstances a draft statement should be circulated to all of those listed in time for them to offer comments.
- (b) Paragraph 96(b) makes it clear that no undertakings about oral statements or their timing should be made before agreement has been reached on their timing and terms: the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has asked that this rule should be respected.
- (c) Copies of the final version of oral statements should be made available to the Chief Whip's Office in good time, so that they can be passed to the Opposition at 3.00 p.m. prompt.

These procedures have been established over the years on the basis of experience. We here will do our best to apply them in a way which will meet as many people's wishes as possible. All of you can help in meeting that objective by following the rules, and by letting us know as soon as possible about any problems which have arisen.

/ I am copying

VLS

- 2 -

I am copying this letter to Private Secretaries to members of Cabinet, including the Minister of Transport, and to Bill Beckett (Law Officers' Department), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

Nick Sanders



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

I should like to draw public attention to some which

*emphasise
have given rise to problems in
the last few weeks:*

Dear Private Secretary,

X Statements and Announcements: Procedures for Clearance

Over the next four weeks we anticipate that there will be a large number of important announcements of Government policy, some of which will be made by oral statements and some by written answer. May I ask you all to look again at paragraphs 95 and 96 of "Questions of Procedure for Ministers", which lay down a detailed procedure for seeking and obtaining clearance for making such announcements. It is essential that all of those rules should be strictly observed if we are to avoid confusion and difficulty.

In particular, it is essential that the Paymaster General should be given early notice of any proposed announcement, together with a draft of the statement in sufficient time for him to comment on it. I should also draw your attention to the fact that separate notice should be given to the Private Secretary and the Press Secretary at No. 10. ~~It would also be helpful if~~ copies of the final version of oral statements should be made available to the Chief Whip's Office in good time, so that they can be passed to the Opposition at 3.00 p.m. prompt. At a time when the pressure of events may make it difficult to fit in oral statements on the day which is the first preference of the Department concerned, it is important that public references to forthcoming statements should be in accordance with the guidance set out in paragraph 96 of "Questions of Procedure".

wherever possible

A

~~Those of us who~~ ^{We} are here and everyone else concerned at the centre with co-ordinating arrangements for announcements will do our best to meet as many people's wishes as possible; but we shall all be greatly helped in meeting that objective if procedures which have been established over the years are followed closely.

I am copying this letter to Private Secretaries to members of Cabinet, including the Minister of Transport, and to Bill Beckett (Law Officers' Department), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

All of the procedures All of the steps set out in "Questions of Procedure" are important, but ^{those} paragraphs 95 and 96 ~~will~~ give details of the steps necessary before

(A) list those who should be consulted before an announcement is made. I would draw your attention particularly to the need to give early notice to the Paymaster General, ~~and wherever possible~~ and to give separate notice to the Private Secretary at the Press Secretary at No 10; ~~where possible~~ and in all but exceptional circumstances to send a draft

statements should be circulated to all of those listed in time for them to ^{offer} ~~to~~ ^{commit} ~~to~~.

(b) ~~the~~ Paragraph 96(b) makes it clear that no undertakings about oral statements or their timing should be made before agreement has been reached on their timing and terms: ~~At~~ the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has asked that this rule should be respected.

(c) A

CONFIDENTIAL

17 June 1980

Briefing

In general the Prime Minister has been content with the briefing she has been receiving for meetings with overseas visitors and for international meetings. She hopes that the present brevity can be maintained and, where possible, accentuated.

I should be grateful if one innovation could be introduced. Where it is known that the Prime Minister is going to have a tete-a-tete meeting, it would be helpful if a single sheet of points to make (or to avoid), covering the entire brief, could be provided.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

(SGD) MICHAEL ALEXANDER

G.G.H. Walden, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CONFIDENTIAL



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

✓
MS

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

30 April 1980

PA

1417

Law Nick

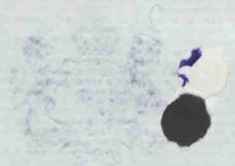
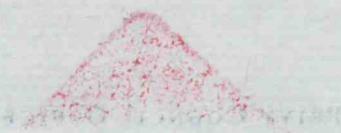
Thank you for your minute of 23 April in response to the letter of 22 April 1980 from Richard Prescott about 'Questions of Procedure for Ministers'.

The problems that we face in this office regarding statements are somewhat different from those experienced by the Paymaster General's Office. Our concern is that Departments occasionally make public references to the timing and the content of statements before matters are finalised and this has led to some criticism from Members from the Floor of the House. It would be helpful if this aspect could be covered in any guidance which - I entirely agree - is best issued from No 10.

I am sending copies of this to Bernard Ingham, Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office), David Wright (Cabinet Office) and Richard Prescott (Paymaster General's Office).

J W STEVENS
Private Secretary

Nick Sanders Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street



WESTERN DIVISION

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

CONFIDENTIAL

...our rights of ...
...to the latter of ...
...about ...
...intimate'

...the ...
...are ...
...of the ...
...that ...
...to the ...
...and ...
...from ...
...It ...
...in ...
...I ...

...of ...
... (...) ...
... (...) ...
... (...) ...

CONFIDENTIAL

...to the ...
...intimate ...
...most



Government Chief Whip

12 Downing Street, London SW1

24 April 1980

Dear Nick

You copied to Murdo MacLean your minute of 23 April to John Stevens about "Questions of Procedure" and, in particular, clearance of announcements and statements.

As far as we are concerned, there is only one point we would like emphasised to Departments, namely, the importance of ensuring that we receive copies of oral statements in good time in order to pass them to the Opposition at 3.00 pm prompt. As you know, recent experience has led us to conclude that Departments have become rather lax in this respect!

I am copying this to John Stevens, Richard Prescott and David Wright.

Yours

Philip Moore

(P J MOORE)

N Sanders Esq
Private Secretary
Office of the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
SW1



24 APR 1960

Government of West Wales

12 Downing Street London SW1



Mr. [Faint name]

11

10

9



JS

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

B/P 25.4.80

MR. STEVENS

Richard Prescott has sent to me a copy of his letter to you of 22 April about "Questions of Procedure" and, in particular, clearance of announcements and statements. There are one or two points that I would like to add to any guidance which is issued on this matter, and I suspect that it might be the most economical way of doing this if we were to send a letter from here. Are there any points which you or Murdo would want us to make?

I am sending copies of this minute to Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office), Richard Prescott (Paymaster General's Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

N. J. SANDERS

23 April 1980

dc.



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

22 April 1980

John Stevens Esq
Private Secretary to the
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Privy Council Office
Whitehall
SW1

QUESTIONS OF PROCEDURE FOR MINISTERS

We discussed briefly yesterday the problem this office is having because Departments are not notifying us of their intention of making an announcement or sending copies of draft statements as they are required to do under the guidelines set out in paragraphs 95 and 96 of Questions of Procedure for Ministers.

You mentioned that your Office is also having a difficulty with some Departments on much the same point and that you would like to see a draft of the letter I propose to send to Private Secretaries. A copy is attached.

It occurred to me that the Prime Minister's Office and the Chief Whip may have problems in the same area. If so it may be more appropriate for a letter to come from No 10 drawing attention to the failure of Departments to follow the guidelines.

I am therefore copying this letter and enclosure to Murdo McClean (Chief Whip's Office) Bernard Ingham and Nick Sanders (No 10) from whom I would also welcome any comments or suggestions.

R E S PRESCOTT
Private Secretary

CONFIDENTIAL



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

22 April 1980

Dear Private Secretary

QUESTIONS OF PROCEDURE FOR MINISTERS:
CHAPTER XII: PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENTS AND PAPERS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Paymaster General is becoming increasingly concerned about the failure of Departments to follow the guidelines set out in paragraphs 95 and 96 of Chapter XII of Questions of Procedure for Ministers.

Paragraph 96 makes it quite clear that this office should be given as long notice as possible of the intention to make an announcement, and in all but exceptional cases that notice should be accompanied by a draft of the proposed statement. The draft should have been approved in broad terms, though not necessarily in detail, by the Minister in charge of the Department. It is very important that we do have an early draft of statements, publications or announcements as the Paymaster General particularly wishes to have the opportunity to comment on them before they are made. We should, of course, also like a copy of the final version of such announcements as soon as it becomes available.

May I ask all Departments to review urgently their present arrangements for notifying this office of impending announcements to ensure that they comply with these guidelines.

R E S PRESCOTT
Private Secretary

CONFIDENTIAL

7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7

22 APR 1960

Prime Minister



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

12 November 1979

Dear Michael,

DRAFT SPEECHES FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

Thank you for your letter of 3 November
(received here on 8 November).

As you will see from the enclosed
--- circular, our minds are moving in parallel.
I have brought your strictures to the
attention of Mr Braithwaite, for relaying
further in the office.

I hope you do not find our circular
too passive or polysyllabic.

Yours ever
GGH

(G G H Walden)

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street

to
Parks

12 NOV 1979



RESTRICTED

Circular Home 'B' 95/79

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

2 October 1979

SPEECH WRITING

1. The drafting of speeches for Ministers is an important, though often neglected, part of our official duties. Speeches must not only reflect policy accurately; they must also be written in a style which is lively, easy to deliver, and meets the particular needs of individual Ministers. I attach a note on the criteria which should govern the drafting of speeches. It is the personal responsibility of the Head of the Department from which the draft is commissioned to ensure that these criteria are met with efficiency and imagination.

OUTSIDE SPEECHES

(a) On general subjects

2. The Planning Staff have a general responsibility for speech-writing in the Office. In particular, they are responsible for writing major speeches on broad issues of foreign policy for the Secretary of State and the Lord Privy Seal, and they are regularly asked to collaborate in the production of speeches for the Prime Minister. They normally receive their commission from the Private Office or the Lord Privy Seal's Office as the case may be. But they may ask for material from Departments if necessary. They naturally clear their drafts as appropriate.

(b) Speeches on particular issues

3. The Private Secretary to the Minister responsible will commission the required speech from the relevant Department. Drafts should be submitted through Under-Secretaries and copies should be sent to Planning Staff for information.

PARLIAMENTARY SPEECHES

(a) On general subjects

4. Where Parliamentary speeches on general subjects are required (eg for a Foreign Affairs Debate) involving the Secretary of State in the House of Lords and the Prime Minister or the Lord Privy Seal in the House of Commons, the Planning Staff will normally receive their commission from the Private Office or Sir Ian Gilmour's Office and will be thereafter responsible for setting the work in hand, collating material from Departments, and final editing and shaping.

RESTRICTED

(b) On particular issues

5. As regards House of Lords business, the Parliamentary Unit (in consultation as necessary with the Private Office) will commission speeches for the Secretary of State or his spokesman on particular issues of policy direct from the Departments responsible. As regards House of Commons business, the procedure will be as in paragraph 3 above.

PARTY POLITICAL SPEECHES

6. By convention, officials are not supposed to produce speeches for delivery on Party political occasions. But Ministers have a right to expect advice on drafts prepared outside the Office and the provision of factual material for inclusion in Party political speeches. Moreover, some measure of discretionary judgement has always to be exercised over the definition of "Party political", not least because on occasions major pronouncements on Government policy have been delivered on political occasions; and in that case officials must obviously be closely involved. In cases of doubt Departments should consult the appropriate Private Office.

7. Heads of Department should also consult Private Offices or the Parliamentary Unit if they wish for guidance on questions of style or presentation. Planning Staff are also glad to help, even when they are not primarily responsible for the production of a particular speech. Before submitting a draft speech, Heads of Department should glance through a selection of previous speeches by the Minister concerned to get an idea of his personal style. Copies are available from Private Offices or from the Planning Staff.

8. An amendment to DSP Volume 1 will be issued shortly.

MICHAEL PALLISER

DISTRIBUTION:

Heads of Department and above.

NOTES ON SPEECH WRITING

1. The purpose of all official prose is to influence an audience. But whereas paper work is designed for the reader, who can absorb complex arguments, if necessary by re-reading them, a speech has to be comparatively simple if it is to impress the hearer. And there is the additional complication that the language must be capable of delivery by the speaker. Both points need to be kept constantly in mind while drafting a speech.
2. If you are asked to write a speech, the first things to discover are:-
 - (a) What is the deadline for the production of the speech?
 - (b) How long should it last? It takes about a minute to deliver 100 words. This means that a 10-minute speech is no more than four to five sides of draft paper. This is probably shorter than you think.
3. As far as possible speeches should have a clear theme, and a beginning, middle and end. This is not always easy, particularly if the speech is to range broadly. But it can be done with ingenuity and imagination.
4. To be comprehensible and deliverable, sentences must be short. There should be a minimum of subordinate clauses. Words should be short and concrete. Verbs should normally be in the active and not the passive mode. Sentences should not be inverted.
5. One naturally feels that speeches demand more rhetoric than official papers. But meaningless rhetoric and padding should be avoided. They tend to creep in particularly in the opening paragraphs of the speech and its peroration.
6. Jokes, anecdotes and quotations can lighten a speech, especially on festive occasions. But you will need to consider carefully whether your jokes are likely to be comprehensible or not to a foreign audience.



Prime Minister

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

3 November 1979

Draft Speeches for the Prime Minister

You and other members of the Private Office have been kind enough recently to forward a number of draft texts for the Prime Minister's use on social occasions, e.g. after meals.

I should be grateful if you could pass on to would-be authors of such speeches (and indeed of any speeches) one or two basic points of guidance. Speeches, oddly enough, have to be spoken. They are not minutes. They should therefore be straightforward and the themes uncomplicated. Paragraphs should be short. Sentences should be no more than twenty words (two lines) long. Jargon, the passive tense and polysyllabic words should be avoided.

If anyone drafting a speech is in doubt about whether or not he is erring in the direction of over-elaboration, let him stand in front of a mirror and try to speak the passage in question!

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

G.G.H. Walden, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

A. C. M.



P.M.
FILE

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

8 June 1979

copied to: P.S. Master Set

Dear John,

The Prime Minister calls for advice from her colleagues from time to time on the content of speeches that she has to undertake, and she also seeks their help in dealing with replies to Members of Parliament as well as in briefing for important occasions and Parliamentary Questions. The Prime Minister has asked me to say that she would always wish the advice on any of these matters which is sent to her office to have been seen, and personally approved by the Cabinet Minister concerned. If particular circumstances, e.g. a visit abroad, makes this impracticable, the senior Minister in the Department should deputise for him.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to all members of the Cabinet, including the Minister of Transport, the Chief Whip and to Sir John Hunt.

Yours ever,

Ken Stowe.

John Chilcot, Esq.,
Home Office.

m

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister JH



FIVE

cc CABINET

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 June 1979

Dear Martin,

Briefs for the Prime Minister on Overseas Affairs

In the light of the briefs prepared for her for the visit to London of Chancellor Schmidt on 10/11 May and for her own visit to Paris for talks with President Giscard on 5 June, the Prime Minister has considered the style and layout which she wishes to be adopted in the briefs for future inward and outward visits and for calls on her by overseas visitors.

The Prime Minister would like the "Objectives" for any visit to be much more concisely expressed than in recent briefs: each objective should be stated in no more than half-a-dozen words or so. The steering brief for a visit should contain a short section on the tactical handling of the talks; the remainder of the steering brief should consist of a summary of all the individual subject briefs, very much on the lines of the draft steering brief prepared for the European Council in Strasbourg on 21/22 June (EQ(S)(79)10) dated 7 June. The individual subject briefs should be divided into two parts: a concise list of points to make, shorter than the present 'Line to Take' but a little fuller than the present 'Summary of Points to Make', followed by a reasonably full factual background section which should distinguish clearly between information which can be freely used and information which should not be disclosed. Any set of briefs must in future be accompanied by a sheet of vital statistics on the country concerned: this could perhaps best appear at the end of the steering brief. The Prime Minister has asked that briefing should at all times avoid woolly generalisations and have a high factual content.

I should be grateful if any briefs prepared for the Prime Minister on overseas matters could in future follow the above pattern. The Prime Minister may, of course, wish further changes to be made in the light of experience.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the members of the Cabinet.

Yours sincerely,
James Callaghan

Martin Vile, Esq.,
Cabinet Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

059

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Original filed PM May 1979
cc Private Secretaries
Press Secretary
Political Secretary
Mr. Wolfson
Mr. Whitmore
Mr. Gow

Prime Minister's Speeches

The Prime Minister considered her programme of future speeches this morning. Two general points were made at the outset:

(a) Her diary should not be overloaded with major speeches: one a month would be probably as much as could be accommodated bearing in mind that major points that she wished to get across on particular issues could probably be got across twice a week in the House of Commons.

(b) It was essential that when Ministers submitted material for her consideration for speeches (and for replies to letters from Members of Parliament, as well as for briefing for important occasions including Parliamentary Questions) the Cabinet Minister concerned should personally take responsibility for the content, tone and style of what was submitted.

Subject to these two considerations, the following conclusions were reached about forthcoming speeches.

President Moi of Kenya (Wednesday 13 June) - this should be a speech of about seven minutes covering appropriate issues for a visiting Head of an African State. Mr. Cartledge to be responsible. Briefing to be commissioned from the FCO.

National Executive Committee (Wednesday 13 June) - this would be wholly political: Mr. Wolfson would be responsible for preparing it.

President Turbay of Colombia (Tuesday 3 July) - the Prime Minister doubted whether there was enough substance in our relations with Colombia to warrant an on-the-record speech with a press handout, but she would be grateful if Mr. Cartledge would get the Foreign Secretary's views on this, and on the content of a speech in whatever proved to be the appropriate mode.

/ CPC Summer School

4th June 1979

Grey Scale #13



A

1

2

3

4

5

6

M

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

B

17

18

19

