

PRIME MINISTER

UK Contribution to EC Budget : Publicity

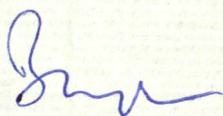
1. We need to consider what steps to take to present our case on the EC Budget in the other countries of the Nine.
2. You decided before Dublin not to give any interviews or briefings to the press beyond what this Press Office, FCO and Treasury were already doing.
3. I think the position in the period running up to the next European Council meeting is rather different. The main arguments for a reduction in our contribution are well-known but we need constantly to counter:
 - (a) mischievous arguments, for example, about North Sea oil, the British economy, etc., put about in Brussels, Paris and, to a lesser extent, Bonn;
 - (b) continually to remind the press and, through them, those officials dealing with the issue in continental capitals that we really do mean business and that we must have an early solution.
4. We have received requests for interviews from many important European outlets and, together with the FCO and Treasury, an active programme involving Lord Carrington, the Lord Privy Seal and Treasury Ministers has already begun. (Details given at Flag A). These requests from the European media include several for interview with you, the most important of which come from Die Welt and French Television. It is, of course, in France and West Germany that we most need to get over our message.

5. I believe you have nothing to lose and much to gain from doing one major French and one major German interview, if you have time between now and the next Council. We can ensure that the media in the rest of the Community, particularly Denmark and the Netherlands, are covered by other Ministers.

6. You may remember that Die Welt asked for an interview through Dr. Barzel last September (Flag B). They have renewed their request and it is strongly supported by our Ambassador in Bonn and by the FCO. Should you be unwilling or would not have time for a full interview, we could try to place an article signed by you in Die Welt, but this would, in my view, be very much a second best.

7. As regards the French, our Ambassador in Paris recommends a television interview, the timing to be decided carefully in the context of our negotiating tactics. I understand that Lord Carrington supports this recommendation and may be writing to you.

8. I recommend that you should do both interviews, subject to satisfactory assurances on the nature of the questions, interview, etc. Do you agree?



B. INGHAM

Yes ans.

18 February, 1980

EC Budget : Publicity Programme

The following is a list of the publicity which has already been undertaken:

- (i) Lord Privy Seal interviewed on Dutch Television (14 December).
- (ii) Two articles by the Lord Privy Seal in the Belgian financial daily "Agefi" on 21 November and 21 December.
- (iii) Lord Privy Seal interviewed on TF1 (French Television) on 23 January.
- (iv) Lord Privy Seal's speech at IFRI (23 February). We are trying to get this published in a suitable French paper, perhaps "Politique Internationale".
- (v) Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech to the French Chamber of Commerce on 17 January.
- (vi) Lord Privy Seal's interview with Europa (published on 5 February in The Times).
- (viii) Lord Carrington's interview with L'Express (on 8 February for publication on 16 February).

For the future we plan:

- (i) Lord Privy Seal's signed article for Le Soir, Brussels (within two weeks).
- (ii) An article for Die Welt or another German newspaper (to be arranged).

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- (iii) An article for Le Monde towards the end of February, perhaps under Lord Carrington's signature.
 - (iv) Lord Carrington to be interviewed on German Television (ARD). No date fixed.
 - (v) Request from French radio to interview Lord Carrington in March (to be arranged, depending on Prime Minister's response to request for interview on French Television).
 - (vi) Nigel Lawson to write a feature article for the Financial Times on the EC budget (which should be widely read in other European capitals).

In addition, briefings are being given regularly to resident and visiting correspondents for EC countries by officials in No. 10, FCO and Treasury.

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 543 OF 27 SEPTEMBER

FOLLOWING FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY.

THE PRIME MINISTER: POSSIBLE INTERVIEW WITH DIE WELT

1. DR RAINER BARZEL, DEFEATED CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE FOR THE CDU/CSU IN 1972, ASKED TO SEE ME AND CAME FOR A TETE-A-TETE LUNCH TODAY. THE OBJECT OF HIS CALL WAS TO ENQUIRE WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE PREPARED TO GIVE AN IN DEPTH INTERVIEW FOR QUOTE DIE WELT UNQUOTE, AT WHICH HE WOULD BE THE INTERVIEWER. THE BACKGROUND, AS HE EXPLAINED IT, WAS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S VICTORY AT THE POLLS AND HER ASSUMPTION OF THE OFFICE OF PRIME MINISTER HAD AROUSED IMMENSE INTEREST IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND HER SUBSEQUENT POLICIES HAD BEEN FOLLOWED WITH SYMPATHY AND HOPE THAT THEY WOULD SUCCEED. THE IDEA WOULD BE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY OF EXPLAINING HER POLICIES IN THE BROADEST SENSE OVER THE WIDEST FIELD BY QUESTION AND ANSWER, ALTHOUGH THERE WOULD ALSO BE SOME EDITORIAL DESCRIPTIVE MATTER-PLACE OF INTERVIEW, WHAT THE PM WAS WEARING ETC. DR BARZEL WOULD BE PREPARED TO SUBMIT THE QUESTIONS BEFORE HAND. HE WOULD COME TO LONDON TO DO THE INTERVIEW TOGETHER WITH AN INTERPRETER. HIS PREFERRED TIME WOULD BE BETWEEN 14 AND 21 OCTOBER ALTHOUGH THERE WOULD NATURALLY BE LATITUDE TO SUIT THE PRIME MINISTER'S CONVENIENCE. I UNDERTOOK TO TRANSMIT THE REQUEST BUT MADE IT CLEAR THAT I COULD IN NO WAY ANTICIPATE THE PRIME MINISTER'S DECISION.
2. I SUPPORT THIS PROPOSAL FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS. I THINK IT WOULD BE WHOLLY IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE ACCOUNT OF THE PURPOSES AND INTENTIONS OF HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT TO BE WIDELY PUBLISHED IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC FROM THE HIGHEST AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE. QUOTE DIE WELT UNQUOTE IS ONE OF THE THREE MOST WIDELY CIRCULATED SERIOUS PAPERS IN THE FRG (THE OTHERS ARE THE QUOTE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG UNQUOTE AND THE QUOTE

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SUEDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG UNQUOTE). MOREOVER IT HAS A PARTICULAR CONNECTION WITH BRITAIN SINCE IT WAS ORIGINALLY LICENSED AFTER THE WAR IN THE BRITISH ZONE. ITS NEAREST EQUIVALENT IN THE UK IS, I SUPPOSE, THE QUOTE DAILY TELEGRAPH UNQUOTE, BOTH IN FORMAT AND EDITORIAL POLICY, ALTHOUGH IT IS WITH QUOTE THE TIMES UNQUOTE, QUOTE LE MONDE UNQUOTE AND QUOTE LA STAMPA UNQUOTE THAT IT PRODUCES A JOINT MONTHLY EUROPA SUPPLEMENT. THE OWNER, AXEL SPRINGER, IS ARGUABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT AND INFLUENTIAL PUBLISHER IN GERMANY. DR BARZEL CAN, IN MY JUDGEMENT, BE RELIED ON BOTH TO PUT THE QUESTIONS AND PRESENT THE ANSWERS FAIRLY. MOREOVER THE TIMING IS RIGHT, SINCE AN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW OF THIS SORT WOULD PROVIDE AN ADMIRABLE CURTAIN RAISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S FORTH-COMING VISIT AT THE END OF OCTOBER.

3. THE ARGUMENTS ARE NOT OF COURSE ALL ON ONE SIDE. DR BARZEL, ALTHOUGH FOR HEALTH REASONS NO LONGER IN THE FIRSTFLIGHT OF FEDERAL POLITICIANS, IS STILL AN IMPORTANT MEMBER OF THE CDU AND OF THE BUNDESTAG. THE CONSERVATIVE VICTORY IN THE UK WAS WIDELY ACCLAIMED HERE AS A FILLIP FOR THE CDU/CSU, AND STRAUSS HAS CLAIMED TO BE QUOTE THE GERMAN MRS THATCHER UNQUOTE. THERE IS ALREADY SOMETHING OF A PRE-ELECTORAL ATMOSPHERE HERE, WITH SOME FAIRLY HEAVY FIRE BEING EXCHANGED BETWEEN STRAUSS AND LEADERS OF THE SPD EG BAHR. IT COULD BE HELD THAT IF THE PRIME MINISTER WERE INTERVIEWED BY DR BARZEL IN A STRONGLY ANTI-SPD PAPER (WHICH DIE WELT IS) IT MIGHT CLOUD HERE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR WHICH, OF COURSE, MUST HAVE PRIORITY.

4. I DO NOT THINK THAT THIS NEED BE A DECISIVE OBJECTION. THE FEDERAL ELECTIONS ARE STILL A YEAR AWAY, AND IT COULD NOT REASONABLY BE MAINTAINED THAT ANY INTERVIEW THE PRIME MINISTER GAVE TO AN OPPOSITION POLITICIAN COULD SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE THEM AT THIS DISTANCE. IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO AVOID ISSUES WHICH ARE A MATTER OF PARTY POLITICAL CONTROVERSY HERE. MOREOVER IF THE INTERVIEW TOOK PLACE AND WERE PUBLISHED IN ADVANCE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT HERE ON 31 OCTOBER, HER DISCUSSIONS AND PRESS CONFERENCE WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT WOULD CANCEL OUT ANY RESIDUAL PARTY POLITICAL ADVANTAGE FOR THE OPPOSITION.

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5. NEVERTHELESS IF, AS I HOPE, THE PRIME MINISTER IS WILLING TO MEET DR BARZEL'S REQUEST, IT WOULD BE WISE IF SHE WERE TO CLEAR HER LINES WITH THE CHANCELLOR FIRST. I THINK THIS COULD BEST BE DONE INFORMALLY BY A TELEPHONE CALL FROM THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRIVATE SECRETARY TO RUHFUS IN THE KANZLERAMT, RATHER THAN THROUGH THIS EMBASSY. IT COULD BE EXPLAINED TO RUHFUS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WELCOMED THE OPPORTUNITY OF GIVING THIS INTERVIEW, WHICH SHE BELIEVED WOULD BE HELPFUL IN TERMS OF EXPLAINING UK POLICIES TO THE GERMAN PUBLIC. SHE WOULD OF COURSE BE CAREFUL TO AVOID ANY IMPRESSION OF TAKING SIDES IN GERMAN INTERNAL POLITICS. BUT SHE WOULD NOT WISH TO GO AHEAD IF THE CHANCELLOR THOUGHT THAT THE INTERVIEW MIGHT CAUSE HIM ANY POLITICAL EMBARRASSMENT. I BELIEVE THAT A MESSAGE ALONG THESE LINES WOULD EFFECTIVELY DISARM THE CHANCELLOR AND THAT THE CHANCES OF HIS RAISING ANY OBJECTION TO THE INTERVIEW WOULD BE VERY SLIGHT. BUT, AS HE TOLD ME AT DINNER THE OTHER NIGHT (MY LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF 20 SEPTEMBER), HE BELIEVES THAT THE ESSENTIAL THING FOR RELATIONS OF CONFIDENCE BETWEEN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT IS THAT THEY SHOULD BE COMPLETELY FRANK WITH ONE ANOTHER. AN APPROACH ON THESE LINES WOULD SHOW THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ACTING IN THE SAME BELIEF.

6. IN SHORT, I CONSIDER THAT THE ADVANTAGES TO THE NATIONAL INTEREST OF ACCEDING TO DR. BARZEL'S REQUEST CONSIDERABLY OUTWEIGH ANY QUALMS, AND THAT THESE QUALMS CAN BE SET AT REST IN THE MANNER I HAVE SUGGESTED.

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