



Prime Minister
Delay decision on ~~now~~ suspending
to Mr de Koster's invitation until
the early Autumn?

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

27 May 1980

Dear Michael,

Yes Mr P - 27/5

Visit of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the
 Council of Europe

Thank you for your letter of 13 May about the two specific points which Mr de Koster raised during his call on the Prime Minister.

Mr de Koster also raised the question of the Council of Europe's budget with Mr Blaker. Mr Blaker made it clear that, at least for the next 4 or 5 years, the United Kingdom wished to maintain its contributions to several international organisations at their present level. As part of their drive to reduce government expenditure, HMG were seeking to prevent the budgets of international organisations from growing in real terms. Mr Blaker also took the opportunity to correct Mr de Koster's false impression about the size of the UK contribution, which will in fact amount to £4.398 million for 1980 (not £2 million).

Sir Frederic Bennett MP put to Mr Cape, the UK Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, the suggestion that the Prime Minister might address the Parliamentary Assembly. He pointed out that in the last 18 months it had been addressed by Chancellor Schmidt, by the Prime Ministers of Malta, Portugal, Spain and Turkey, and by several Foreign Ministers including those of Egypt and Israel.

A visit by the Prime Minister would be taken as a sign of our continuing support for the Council which does indeed provide a useful platform. The timing of the January session proposed by Mr de Koster is presumably flexible since there are 3 sessions of the Parliamentary Assembly each year, in January, April and September. However, the January session will take place during the CSCE Review Meeting in Madrid, shortly after the new term of office of the US President begins and it could be a convenient occasion, for instance, for a major speech on East/West relations. All the same, Lord Carrington would not place a very high priority on the Council of Europe as the forum for a speech of this kind; and we do the Council quite well. The United Kingdom was represented last year by the Lord Chancellor's address on a subject which was particularly appropriate for the Council of Europe, that of Habeas Corpus and Human Rights. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary will be expected to appear before the Assembly in 1982 when he is Chairman of the Committee of Ministers. If the Prime Minister

/did not want



did not want to accept Mr de Koster's invitation it would be reasonable to wait until that occasion before seeking another opportunity for a representative of HMG to address the Assembly.

Yours etc

Paul

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