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PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH MR FOOT: ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT REAGAN TO MEMBERS
OF BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

Background

President Reagan's representative, Mr Deaver, visited London on 15 February. A number of possibilities for the programme, including that of an address to Parliament, were discussed.

On 17 February I wrote to the FCO (copy attached) saying that you would wish to consider the programme carefully before any final agreement was reached on it.

The FCO have been awaiting the White House reaction to the various ideas discussed during Deaver's visit. They were told last week that the White House needed another 7 - 10 days before reacting.

The FCO intention, following receipt of the American reaction, had been to write to the Lord Great Chamberlain and seek the Queen's approval for an outline programme. Then, formal approaches to the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker and the Opposition would have been arranged. (When Deaver was in London he visited Westminster Hall to look at possible practical arrangements on the ground. The Sergeant at Arms and Black Rod were present).

On 2 March you said, in reply to a written question by Norman Atkinson: "Preliminary discussions about the arrangements for the visit ^{have} had been held with President Reagan's staff, but detailed planning is at a very early stage".

Opposition Attitudes

Mr McCaffrey from Mr Foot's Office rang me today to say that the Opposition were "surprised and agitated" at the news that an address by President Reagan was being planned. He thought that the Labour Party would be "very resistant". President Reagan was a controversial figure who had not been long in office. The privilege

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of an address to both Houses was traditionally reserved for particularly distinguished statesmen. He thought the Opposition would be "angry" at the news.

I explained that the Government had, of course, intended the fullest possible consultation with the Opposition, that the visit was three months away, that we were in a very preliminary planning stage and that we had been surprised by premature statements from the White House.

Points to stress with Mr Foot

- (a) your Written Answer of 2 March.
- (b) the White House announcement was premature and not cleared with us.
- (c) the visit does not begin until 7 June, some three months hence.
- (d) we certainly intended fullest consultation with the Opposition. That preliminary planning is at a very early stage is demonstrated by the fact that the Lord Chancellor and the Speaker have not yet been approached.

AJC.

8 March, 1982



FILE

RM

VA

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

17 February, 1982

Visit of President Reagan

FCO telegram No. 280 to Washington sets out the latest state of the programme following the recent visit by Mr Deaver.

I have, of course, given the Prime Minister a broad account of the programme as it now stands but I am sure that she will wish to consider it carefully before any final agreement is reached on it. I should, therefore, be grateful if you could ensure that at the appropriate time a draft is sent here for submission to the Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, the various references in FCO telegram No. 280 to participation by the Prime Minister should be regarded as provisional. For example, I have not yet consulted Mrs Thatcher about the precise form of her talks with the President or about the speeches at lunch. The telegram accurately reflects certain suggestions I made during the various meetings with Deaver but these should not yet be regarded as having the approval of the Prime Minister.

A. J. COLES

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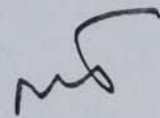
Tuesday 2 March 1982

*15 Mr Norman Atkinson (Haringey, Tottenham): To ask the Prime Minister, what arrangements have been made by Her Majesty's Government for President Reagan's visit to the United Kingdom.

(Answered by the Prime Minister)

CIRCULATED AS WRITTEN:

Preliminary discussions about the arrangements for the visit have been held with President Reagan's staff, but detailed planning is at a very early stage.



↳ See Notes Below

8/3/82

FROM SIR TOM McCaffrey:

Arrangements for foreign Heads of State to address both Houses of Parliament should be made only in consultation and cooperation with Opposition parties in both Houses, and the House authorities. Such arrangements cannot properly be made by the Government alone.

The Parliamentary Labour Party heard first from news reports today that such a proposal had been put to President Reagan and had to make enquiries of 10 Downing Street to have this confirmed.

Such arrangements are made only rarely for foreign Statesmen who have already made a contribution to world affairs. It is a departure from our tradition for a Head of State so recently elected to have this honour offered to him at this time.