

Parliament

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

V  
MS

22 May 1980

Dear Sanders,

I apologise for the delay in replying to your letter of 25 April about the provision of Country Assessment Papers (CAPs) to the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs (FAC). We had been looking at the Prime Minister's comments, together with those of other departments. But in fact, I think we can respond to the Prime Minister's suggestions quite simply.

Mr Blaker had decided, subject to the views of other Ministers, that the FCO should make available to the FAC up-to-date (and desensitised) CAPs on request. In the normal course of events they are revised every three years (they are a basic document for the FCO Inspectors who visit overseas posts roughly every three years). As CAPs come up for revision they are now being put in a form suitable for handing over to the FAC. The papers for the FAC will be the same as those used in the Service. There will be no problem of censored documents. All this is therefore already in line with the Prime Minister's views.

In addition, the Prime Minister has suggested sending CAPs to the FAC as and when they are revised. Hitherto, we have supplied revised papers only on request. We believe the FAC are satisfied with this arrangement. Mr Blaker doubts if they would wish to receive piecemeal, CAPs dealing with countries that are not the subject of current enquiry. If, for example, we were to revise our CAP on Brazil next month, while the FAC only turned their attention to the country in eight months' time, we would have to update it again. Unless I hear from you (or those to whom I am copying this letter) to the contrary we will continue to supply revised CAPs to the Committee on request.

/I am

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of the Cabinet and Mr Channon and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours ever,*

*C A Munro*

C A Munro  
PS/Mr Blaker

N J Sanders Esq  
No 10 Downing Street