

PRIME MINISTER

Interview with French Television

1. You have agreed to be interviewed by Antenne 2, the second national television channel in France, on Monday. The 20-25 minute broadcast will go out at 8.30 p.m. Paris time in the "Cartes sur Table" programme - a Panorama-type feature. Previous guests have included Chancellor Schmidt and President Sadat.
2. The recording at 10.30 a.m. on Monday will be in the White Drawing Room. There will be two interviewers - Jean Pierre Elkabbach and Alain Duhamel, whose biographies are attached (Flag A).
3. The broad format of the programme is set out at Flag B. We want to make sure of two things:
  - the Eurobudget issue comes very high up in the interview; and
  - you record down to time so that there is no editing.
4. We have arranged for an oral briefing at 10 a.m. on Monday. Michael Franklin and Michael Alexander will be there.

Purpose

5. The objective of the interview is to win French friends and to influence French people in the run up to the Budget Council on March 31 - April 1 in Brussels. It will therefore be important to be positive about your commitment to Europe and its development; and emphatic about the things we have in common with the French, soft pedalling the problems between us.

6. All this needs to be accomplished without giving any impression at home that you are going soft on the solution to our Budgetary problem. (N.B. - Antenne 2 has made arrangements to provide French and English transcripts to UK and French correspondents and to give them a preview here in London at 5.30 p.m. on Monday).

Mechanical Points

7. Two things are important:
- i. to keep replies simple and direct (without getting involved in detailed technical arguments) so that the interview translates easily and clearly; and
  - ii. to express cash amounts in French francs (as the briefing does).

Points to get over

8. We are agreed with Cabinet Office, FCO and Treasury that you should get over the following positive points:-

- the UK's and your own commitment to Europe, bringing out our "Communautaire" approach;
- the UK budget problem; its size and scope; and how it relates to the French contribution, without being critical of the French;
- your determination to make Britain stronger economically and how a genuine compromise on our Budget problem could help in this; the sooner the better for Europe;

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- the importance of getting this major injustice out of the way because of all the dangers that beset the world and the premium that that puts on greater cohesion in Europe;
- your commitment to work hard at developing a cohesive Europe when, as it will be, the problem is sorted out.

In perspective

9. The following points need to be put in perspective and the main body of briefing (Flag C) covers them:

- North Sea oil - a resource, like French agriculture, which is already included in GNP calculations;
- juste retour - not our aim; prepared to pay our way and to put more in when we can afford;
- trade flows - how well we have adapted to the EC and what a good deal it has proved for French agriculture;
- our approach to CAP - we agree that the EC should have an agriculture policy but that it is generally recognised to be in need of reform to avoid surpluses.

Beware

10. The following issues, also dealt with in the main briefing, need careful handling:

- EMS - not if, but when;
- sheepmeat - sorrow, rather than anger; we are not out to damage French sheep farmers;
- threats if you do not get your own Budget way - play down threats; determined to get Budget problem behind you by agreement;
- relations with French - bring out positive points (see main briefing) and bilateral interests - e.g. nuclear, defence collaboration, aerospace;
- our reputedly excessive Atlanticism.

#### Peroration

11. You ended Panorama on a very high note. It would help if you could leave the French audience with the thought that you want to be a good friend of France and Europe - i.e. let's get our problems sorted out and move forward together. We shall ask the interviewer to signal the final question.

#### Final Thought

12. On Monday, you should aim to play the French at their own game - advancing the UK's views and interests behind a smokescreen of Community language. The prize: the equivalent of 9 billion French francs.

#### Additional Briefing

13. I am also attaching, by way of additional material:-

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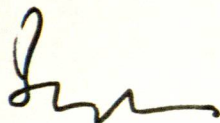


Flag D - our Ambassador's telegram which contains good advice;

Flag E - a transcript of Giscard's TV interview on February 26; the interesting bits are sidelined;

Flag F - Lord Carrington's interview with L'Express on February 8 (relevant bits sidelined).

Flag G - a transcript of your "Panorama" interview (relevant bits sidelined).



B. INGHAM

7 March, 1980