

PRIME MINISTER

GORDON CLOUGH INTERVIEW

I am arranging for Gordon Clough and his team to start the interview at 10.00am and be away before 11.00am.

I aim to get to Chequers for 9.00am for briefing. Content?

Election

Mr Clough is well aware that you will not be forthcoming on the election or the considerations which enter into your decision. He hopes, however, you will accept the journalistic requirement to ask you about an election. I have said you don't mind people asking questions so long as they accept they are not going to get any information by way of reply.

I expect he will go through the ritual and then turn to the real business.

Background

You will recall that World this Weekend wanted to interview you at the New Year. You were than not able to do so, but I promised Gordon Clough I would seek a slot for them as soon as convenient. It was agreed some months ago that a 4th anniversary interview would make sense and this is the result.

In practice the background is now not much different than when you agreed to the interview, given that you have been saying for months you would not really get down to thinking seriously about an election until you had entered your fifth year.

Pattern

Gordon Clough acnknowledges that this is a 4th anniversary interview and, given that you will not say anything about an election, he wants mainly to look forward, while at the same time looking back.

This is likely to lead to the following pattern of interview:

1. election (if only to get it out of the way; alternatively he may leave this to the end);
2. what can we expect if you get a second term?;
3. economic - inflation, money supply, prudent policies;
4. unemployment;
5. rates;
6. trade union reform (TUC's £50,000 image campaign);
7. European Community - what are we going to achieve at Stuttgart which might be in the middle of a General Election?;
8. defence/disarmament - Andropov; Cruise/Pershing; independent deterrent;
9. Williamsburg - international affairs; trans-Atlantic alliance;
10. personal - how do you feel after 4 years etc? Are you looking forward to 9; 14 etc?

Advice

I suggest the following lines:

Election: Be very sharp, but courteous. You haven't decided. Won't necessarily decide today (Sunday). No rush. Over last 4 years not allowed myself to be knocked about. Don't intend to give way now. Will announce an election when I choose; not when life easier for others. I shall go to country when I think is in the national interest - that means when I think I shall win and give least advantage to Foot, Steel/Jenkins both of whom the country needs like it needs a hole in the head. I've said enough. Don't propose to say any more.

What to expect for a second term?: Please see what you said in the Wall Street Journal (Annex I). I think this is a model. But can you inject most strongly the thought of a country prosperous by its own hard work, effort, initiative and enterprise?

Economic: I would be ruthless here in savaging 364 economists etc.

You have got inflation down by prudent economics - by keeping tight hold on money; by promoting eternal virtues; by killing the idea that the solution to our future lies in witch-doctors, fancy footwork. Don't apologise. People know, from their own experience, that you can only work your way to success; you can't play around and win.

Unemployment, Trade Union Reform: Willie Rickett has prepared the briefing at Annex II and III respectively.

European Community: The FCO has contributed Annex IV. There are 2 issues here:

- will you go to Stuttgart - I certainly intend to; I am determined to get a fair and lasting settlement for Britain - so far the EC has temporised but that has brought back to Britain over £2bn; now we must sort it out once and for all, which is what the European Parliament wants, too.

Defence/disarmament: Willie has produced the briefing at Annex V.

Williamsburg (as with rates): I do not think I need to produce briefing on this. But you do need to say you intend to go; it is very important that you do because these annual summits require a sound, British input. Rates briefing is at Annex VI.

I do not think you need burden yourself with any more briefing.

Demeanour

This is arguably the most important thing. I want you to be kind, courteous and perhaps even indulgent of Gordon Clough. But very firm when you need to be on the lines advocated above.

That is another way of saying I want you to be your own lively, vivacious self who is not prepared to put up with any nonsense, but is nice with it. This is not an ordinary interview; you are, more than usual impressing voters.

Sock it to them - nicely.



B. INGHAM
6 May 1983

~~Printed~~
MR RICKETT

Note
I have given Ian Kydd briefing on A, B, and C.
Of Emp have promised a note on D. p.a.

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WORLD THIS WEEKEND

The pattern of the Gordon Clough interview on Sunday will be:

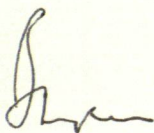
- General Election;
- A** - Rates;
- County Councils;
- B** - Andropov suggestions and Nuclear Debate;
- C** - Unemployment;
- Position of Mr Whitelaw - Crossbow article;
- D** - TUC Document about trades unions published last Tuesday.

This is not exclusive and I shall be in touch with them again tomorrow and over the weekend.

I wonder however if you could get together briefing, prepared initially for Questions, for the box tomorrow night which I might add to my minute?

I think the three key areas for briefing are:

- Andropov initiative and nuclear debate;
- unemployment, on which they may dwell; (they think Brian Walden in January - see attached - did too little on this); and
- TUC document (which opens up opportunity to talk about reform).



B. INGHAM

5 May 1983