

PRIME MINISTER

Your Press Conference Today

You are to give a press conference, which looks like being very well attended, in the field immediately after lunch but before you watch the battle group attack.

Subject to anything arising in the meantime - and we shall keep in touch with No.10 - I expect the questioning to concentrate on three things:

- your commitment to maintaining BAOR at 55,000 (especially in view of the Adam Smith Institute's recommendation that it should be halved and a global British rapid deployment force created);
- your views on INF and Cruise, Pershing deployment; and
- your talks with Chancellor Kohl this evening (which may also lead on to prospects for a reform of the EC Budget in view of the Foreign Secretary's pretty fruitless Foreign Affairs Council yesterday).

I will preside over the press conference and select the questions. You will not have time to do interviews afterwards so I propose to let radio and TV record the whole of the conference. As time is limited - and because you will be on radio and TV - your replies to questions should be pretty brisk.

So far as the BAOR commitment is concerned, more detailed questions might arise on-

- whether the C-in-C has asked you for more money, men and equipment
- the replacement of Phantoms
- the relative cost of conventional forces versus nuclear and the choice that has to be made
- standardisation of equipment (and risk of lost orders for British industry)

/The Free

The Press Conference gives you three opportunities:

- to praise the morale, professionalism and efficiency of British Forces Germany
- to underline your commitment to maintain BAOR at 55,000 for military and political reasons
- to emphasise your determination to deploy Cruise if it becomes necessary in the light of Geneva, and your belief that NATO Allies will remain solid.

I attach at Annex I a draft aide memoire; and at Annex II a British Forces Germany Press Summary of the Adam Smith Institute report.

21 September 1983

MEMO I

This is my first visit to British Forces Germany as Prime Minister.

I am very pleased that I have at last made a visit I always wanted to undertake.

It has been an instructive and reassuring experience.

Enormously impressed with the morale, professionalism and high efficiency, based on thorough training, of our forces.

would like to congratulate C in C, and staff, on all that I have seen and for the excellent programme they have laid on for me. And the CBS for joining me on the whole of the tour.

Yesterday and this morning I spent mostly with the RAF, at Wildenrath and Bruggen.

But also was given extensive NATO and British Forces briefings and had the opportunity for discussions with senior officers.

Today, as you know, I have been to ^{Guters} Petersloh and Eberhard, a school at Mohne and now with the Army in the field.

Later today I shall see a battle group attack when I join the Armoured brigade at Soltan/Lüneberg.

Then this evening I shall have a working dinner with Chancellor Kohl before flying back to London.

To summarise: an excellent and heartening visit. I am most impressed with all that I have seen and I would like to repeat my congratulations to all on their high state of efficiency. British Forces Germany are a positive and essential part of our defence and deterrence.