

PRIME MINISTER

NEW YEAR'S EVE BROADCAST

You have agreed to give short news interviews to BBC radio, TV, ITN and IRN on New Year's Eve. Afterwards you have agreed to give UP/ITN a separate interview for their video cassette review of the year (see below).

Your interviewers will be:

- John Cole, Political Editor, BBC;
- David Walter, ITN. (He is very good and you may recall covered your India/Oman trip);
- Peter Allen, IRN; and
- Martyn Lewis for UP/ITN. (He did this interview last year).

It is important that you start the interviews at 11.30 because we want to catch the lunchtime newscasts - eg World at One. The news interviewers are aware that only short interviews are intended.

You could do the interviews either in my room or in the White Room. My room is more spartan and perhaps more in keeping with the times. But I think it would be better in the White Room. Content?

Objective

The purpose of the interview is to put the best possible presentation on 1981 (which, by common consent, was a rather horrid year) and to give the public hope for 1982. I hope it may be possible to say each interview demonstrates:

- you are in command, unruffled and confident;
- you can see light at the end of the tunnel, provided we persevere;
- we are winning through and it is all worthwhile; and
- you really do care.

On the last point, I must stress the opportunity that these interviews offer you of projecting yourself into 1982 with a softer, more compassionate image while at the same time spreading optimism about our prospects in a suitably restrained way.

Understanding

We have offered the interviews on the basis that they look back briefly on 1981 and more extensively forward to 1982.

In practice the interviews will concentrate on the economy but other subjects which could be covered are:

- the state of the Labour Party, the challenge of the SDP and the prospects for your securing a second term;
- Poland, the apparent split in the Atlantic Alliance over the response, and the world post-Afghanistan and Poland;
- the prospects of progress in Northern Ireland; and
- the future of the EC (since most commentators are extremely gloomy about its political health); the prospects for securing a satisfactory Budget settlement and your view of the UK presidency.

I hope to persuade the interviewers - if any persuasion is necessary - to forget the Fairbairn affair. I am taking the view the subject is not for this series of interviews.

Arrangement of briefing

Much of the briefing in the Annexes was prepared for your interviews last week with the Sunday Express. A copy of that interview is at Annex I.

In addition I attach at Annex II your message to Conservative News which was published early on December 21. Clive and I agree that it would be wrong to issue yet another New Year Message. Instead, we can give copies of the Conservative News message to your interviewers bringing out the idea that the greatest of all resolutions for 1982 is resolution itself.

I understand that Mr Parkinson may issue a New Year Message from CCO. We shall ask CCO to let you have a copy. We shall also try to get to you any messages released by the Opposition Parties before your interviews.

At Annex III you will find the latest good news sheet from your Questions briefing. This needs to be supplemented by the excellent strike record for 1981 which is coming out tomorrow in the D/Employment Gazette (briefing requested from D/Employment).

At Annex IV I attach the FT review of today of some 15 different economic forecasts.

The rest of the briefing are Departmental notes setting out 1981 achievements and prospects for 1982 and beyond. There is an index to the Annexes.

Industrial Disputes

Potentially, 1982 could get off to a bad start with Ford, steel, British Rail and the miners threatening to explode. Separate briefing on these matters will come to you tomorrow evening.

UP/ITN

Last year you gave Martyn Lewis, ITN, an interview for a home video cassette review of the year. ITN aims to build up a cassette library of historical significance and apparently last year's - the first - was a success.

Lewis's proposed questions (set out below) do not, I believe, cause any difficulty and are covered by the briefing. They are:

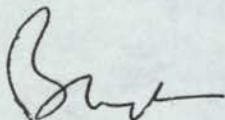
- When you were interviewed last year there were questions about the prospects of serious social disorder - you discounted those fears at the time. Don't you now accept that Government policies must bear at least some of the blame for the disorders which have taken place?
- Would you accept that most opinion polls show unemployment is now the most pressing issue facing the country?

- Even if inflation is a terrible evil many, even in the Tory Party, think you are paying too high a price to cure it. At what point would you accept that strict monetarist policy has failed - say 3½ million or 4½ million unemployed?
- Were you glad that this year the Labour Party is tearing itself apart rather than tearing the Government apart?
- Does the success of the Social Democrats worry you?
- This time last year you said that Britain was beginning to face up to problems with a Government with courage to solve them. How would you describe 1981?
- What are the prospects for 1982?

Conclusion

I shall prepare a press digest for you on Thursday morning and will be available for briefing, as arranged, from 10.30 or as soon as you wish.

We will do radio - ie IRN - first; then BBC which will do radio and TV simultaneously; then ITN; and after a short break UP/ITN.



B. INGHAM

29 December 1981

LATE NEWS

ITN are planning to use an Outside Broadcast Unit because it gives better quality. This involves a lot of cable etc. It would be much more convenient to record all the interviews in my room rather than the White Room. Content?