



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Press Secretary

16 December 1983

I am sorry I had to leave your meeting yesterday afternoon for Prime Minister's Questions. You kindly asked if I wished to make a contribution, but I fear I had run out of time and simply had to get away.

Had I been able to stay I would have made the following comments in the light of the discussion:

1. it seems fortunate that Christmas is coming to provide a natural break in the counter-attack; this should be used to get our act better together;
2. the D/Environment has already provided the basic arsenal of fact to convey to the public, but this needs to be supplemented by Transport, Education, Home Office, Wales, Arts and DHSS. D/Environment could usefully bring the input from the specialist Departments together into a central brief which copes with the problem of trans-Departmental responsibilities;
3. the work already done is already being used in support of such "engine room" activities as letters, articles, speech briefs etc. BUT we are still apparently missing an important dimension - namely the development of a press, radio and television campaign which dictates the battle and forces opponents on to the defensive; at present we are responding to rather than controlling events. Whatever finish still needs to be applied to the Government's policy and case we cannot allow the opposition to dictate the game for much longer;
4. thus I envisage a campaign which is conducted at at least two levels:
 - the admin-PR level by which the D/Environment unit provides the basic factual ammunition and ensures it gets to all who require it - eg. MPs, councillors, journalists etc;

- the highly visible PR level by which the Government's messages are conveyed through press but more especially radio and tv to a mass audience.

This requires the D/Environment unit to operate offensively and defensively:

- offensively by compiling a diary so anticipating events, orchestrating the Government's attack and positively identifying a theme of the week, or weekend, and gearing up the machine to hammer home the message related to the theme;
 - defensively, to keep closely on top of day-to-day events and developments in the attack and to ensure that articles or spokesmen for radio and tv interviews are in place.
5. What if any additional machinery is required? Such a local government campaign of the kind I envisage is larger and more difficult than the nuclear defence campaign mounted by the MOD. But it could be effectively operated if:
- a meeting of the size of your's yesterday (but not much larger) were held once a week for an hour with a clear agenda, supported by a campaign diary; and
 - the Heads of Information of the Departments concerned met the day before to co-ordinate their advice. I would be prepared to chair this meeting if it would help, but I would prefer David McDonald to do so with my personal support.

You may care to discuss.

I am copying only to the Lord President and Andrew Turnbull.

BERNARD INGHAM

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin, MP.