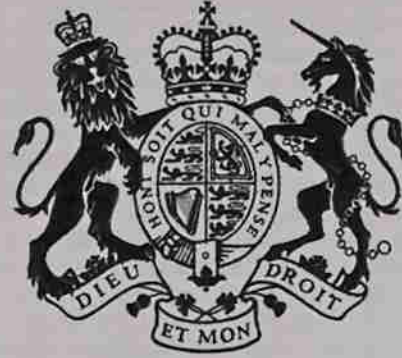


SECRET



10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

OPERATION ABERCORN

In line with your response to my earlier minute (Annex I), I have made the following media arrangements with the NIO for your visit:

- i) there will be NO advance information to the media of your visit; NIO are confident they can get cameras to your first port of call without such notice;
- ii) NIO will organise a media pool of one TV camera crew, one still photographer, one radio reporter and one press reporter (Press Association) who will have sole access at particular points in the programme; the Northern Ireland media are against pooling but they will have to lump it;
- iii) it will be made clear to the media at the outset that you do not intend to give interviews or be doorstepped; (some of course will try to defeat this and you should be very firm);
- iv) where you can go on walkabout there will be no restrictions on the media except by means of a mobile barrier (rope) operated by the police, if this is possible; NIO are going into the feasibility;
- v) only the pool will be admitted to any store at your first port of call;
- vi) there will be unrestricted access at Armagh for your arrival and departure, though the media will be penned behind a barrier;
- vii) we will admit the pool to the last five minutes of your lunch with the security forces etc in order to film your remarks; if you agree to address those present briefly this will enable you to get across your message to a wider public;
- viii) only the pool will be admitted to the border post;
- ix) no objection is raised to the media filming your departure at Aldergrove, subject to their being penned behind a barrier
- x) NIO will consult the authorities to ensure there is no objection to the presence of cameras when you meet the security forces.

B Ingham  
20.12.83

SECRET



SECRET

PRIME MINISTER

OPERATION ABERCORN

I would like your guidance on the handling of the media on this event.

The media has always been a problem in Northern Ireland because of their aggressiveness, refusal to pool resources and propensity for abusing help.

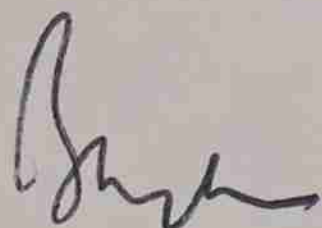
Because of this we tried to restrict access on the occasion of your last visit to sound and pictures. This almost worked, at the price of a lot of grumbling, apart from a snatched interview by ITN. You also gave a straight-to-camera statement at the end of your visit in place of the interviews which would be normal elsewhere.

Your interests are largely served if you are seen moving among and talking to the security forces and the public. There is therefore a great deal to be said for restricting access and for resolutely refusing to be doorstepped.

Such an approach to the media would not be popular and there would be complaints, but you do not go to Northern Ireland for the media's benefit.

Content therefore for me to arrange with the Northern Ireland Office a media programme which:

- rules out interviews, including doorstepping?
- bans the presence of microphones except where laid down by us - i.e. excludes them from ordinary conversations with members of the public or forces but permits them on those occasions where you are saying something you want to be heard more widely?
- to achieve this we so arrange the programme that the media are admitted - e.g. to a barracks or a meeting room - for when you say a few words to the assembled company?
- you dispense with the statement to camera at the end (which I do not think you regarded as a success last time) and simply issue a written statement, having said what you want to say to the media at pre-determined points?



B Ingham  
16.12.83

SECRET

