



From the Secretary of State

Prime Minister

Agree to receive Madame  
Chen Muhua for 30 minutes  
at 9.30 on Tuesday, 29 March?

Yes, not A.C. 3/2.

4 February 1983

A J Coles Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1

Dear John

VISIT OF THE CHINESE MINISTER OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND  
TRADE: 27 MARCH - 1 APRIL 1983

The purpose of this letter is to ask if the Prime Minister would be willing to receive a courtesy call from the Chinese Minister of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade, Mme Chen Muhua, during Mme Chen's visit to Britain. This is expected to be between 27 March and 1 April 1983 : certainly she will be in London on the 28th and 29th March.

Mme Chen's visit is in response to the invitation issued by the Prime Minister during her visit to China last September. Lord Cockfield will be her host. After leaving Britain, Mme Chen will go on to Malta, France and Belgium.

It would be appropriate for the Prime Minister to receive a courtesy call from Mme Chen, not only because the visit stems from the Prime Minister's invitation, but also on broad political and trade grounds. This will be Mme Chen's first visit to Britain, and the first visit by a senior Chinese Minister since the Chinese government reforms in early 1982. It is therefore a significant event in UK/Chinese political, as well as trade, relations.

The Chinese may be nearing important decisions on the Guangdong nuclear project. The French are very likely to use Mme Chen's visit to further their interest in that project, and we must ensure that Mme Chen's reception in this country is at least as good as she will receive in France. A call on the Prime Minister would be the clearest possible indication of the importance we attach to our political and trade links with China, and to the Guangdong project in particular. It is also significant that the Chinese Prime Minister generally receives Senior British Ministers visiting China. We find such meetings valuable and wish to encourage the practice to continue.



*From the Secretary of State*

Details of Mme Chen's programme, including arrangements for her to meet other Departmental Ministers, are currently being worked out.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and to the Secretary of State for Industry.

*Yours sincerely,  
John Rhodes*

JOHN RHODES  
Private Secretary

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POST OFFICE

CONFIDENTIAL

CHINA



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

N.B.P.R.

HL 8/2

Dear John,

Visit of Chinese Minister of Foreign Economic Relations and  
Trade: 27 March - 1 April 1983

Mr Pym has seen John Rhodes's letter of 4 February to you. He supports the proposal that Mme Chen should call on the Prime Minister. The visit will be a significant event for Anglo-Chinese bilateral relations (ministerial visits in this direction are rare) and John Rhodes's letter sets out the positive advantages to us of making the visit a success. For Mme Chen to be received at the highest level would in our view contribute substantially to this. We see no particular implications for Hong Kong in whether or not she is received by the Prime Minister. It is too soon to take a view on whether or not the Prime Minister should raise Hong Kong with Mme Chen, if Mrs Thatcher agrees to the call.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Rhodes and to Jonathan Spencer in the Department of Industry.

Yours ever  
John Holmes

(J E Holmes)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL



huc (W)  
China

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

8 February, 1983

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(P)

VISIT OF THE CHINESE MINISTER OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC  
RELATIONS AND TRADE

Thank you for your letter of 4 February. The Prime Minister would be glad to receive Madame Chen Muhua for 30 minutes at 0930 hrs on Tuesday, 29 March.

I am copying this letter to John Holmes (FCO) and Jonathan Spencer (Department of Industry).

A. J. COLES

J. Rhodes, Esq.,  
Department of Trade