

E.R.

PRIME MINISTER

On Tom Bridges' letter attached, I propose to say, if you agree, that you would wish Signor Pertini to reach his own decision about attending the Oxford Encaenia on grounds relevant to him, without taking anything else into account. It would clearly be very damaging if it became known that you had discouraged Pertini from attending - and, being Italy, I dare say that it would become known.

Agreed ms.

F.R.B.

4 March, 1985.

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BRITISH EMBASSY,
ROME.

25 February 1985

F E R Butler Esq
Principal Private Secretary
to the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Robin

I am writing to ask if you could be so kind as to help me over a problem arising from the recent decision by Congregation of Oxford University. While deciding not to approve the proposed honorary degree to the Prime Minister, Congregation gave its assent to the award of DCL by Diploma to the President of the Italian Republic. Pertini is thus due to appear at Oxford on June 26, and take part in the Encaenia along with the other honorands.

It is not clear whether Pertini will be able to attend, since the ceremony at Oxford will take place in the very last weeks of his seven-year Presidency, when elections will be going on to select the next President. It is not excluded that he may be persuaded to stand for a second term. Until recently I believed that these doubts made it uncertain, for the next few months, whether he would go to Oxford or not. But I now have reason to believe that a fresh doubt may present itself, namely that (according to some Italians who may be expected to press their views on Pertini) it is believed that Mrs Thatcher would take it amiss if Pertini were to attend a ceremony from which the Prime Minister has been so brusquely excluded by the majority vote of members of Congregation.

It would be most helpful to receive some guidance from you about this. Clearly it is a delicate matter, and I have no wish whatever to intrude, but I foresee a situation in which I may be asked to give guidance about the attitude of the Prime Minister and it is important that I should not misrepresent her views.

/President

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F E R Butler Esq

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25 February 1985

President Pertini himself has a very warm and sincere feeling for the Prime Minister, and he would not wish to do anything in connection with the Encaenia which could cause her an offence. As this involves the President's personal feelings for the Prime Minister, I therefore thought it was right to ask you this difficult question.

Yours ever
Tom

Bridges



10 DOWNING STREET

FERB

The most damaging thing
would for it to become
known that we are
had discouraged Restini. And
being Italy, we must be
a risk that even the
~~the~~ most discreet hint of
this would become
public.

The only possible reply
is that the Prime Minister
would ~~read~~ with Restini

to reach his own
decision on grounds
relevant to him, without
taking anything else into
account. My guess is
that he would on that
basis decide not to go -
but our hands would be
clean.

CDH.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

4 March, 1985

Many thanks for your letter of 25 February. I realise the sensitivity of the question on which you may be consulted.

I am quite confident that, if you are consulted on this matter, the Prime Minister would want you to say that Signor Pertini should reach his own decision about attending the Oxford Encaenia on grounds relevant to him, without taking anything else into account. The last thing that she would want is that he should feel that he should be influenced by what has happened in relation to herself. You can certainly assure Signor Pertini that, whichever way his decision goes, it would have absolutely no effect on the Prime Minister's regard for him.

F. E. P. BUTLER

His Excellency The Lord Bridges, K.C.M.G.

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26 June.

CCP



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

8 March, 1985

Dear Charles,

President Pertini of Italy: Honorary Degree from Oxford University

We have been informed by our Ambassador in Rome that President Pertini is to be awarded an honorary Degree of Doctor of Civil Laws by Oxford University.

Lord Bridges understands that the President will attend the Encaenia ceremony on 26 June if he can, but that there is an element of uncertainty about this because of the Italian Presidential elections which take place at around the same time. Despite his great age Pertini may stand again.

I should be grateful if you would let us know whether, if President Pertini does come to the UK, the Prime Minister would wish to receive him. When he was last in London in February 1984, he came as a Guest of Government and the Prime Minister hosted a lunch in his honour.

I am copying this letter to Sir Philip Moore at Buckingham Palace.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street



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cc: PC ✓

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 March, 1985

PRESIDENT PERTINI OF ITALY: HONORARY DEGREE FROM OXFORD UNIVERSITY

Thank you for your letter of 8 March.

I think it likely that, if the President did come to the United Kingdom to receive an Honorary Degree, the Prime Minister would wish to see him. She could in fact give a dinner for him on 26 June.

I am copying this letter to Sir Philip Moore at Buckingham Palace.

(C D Powell)

C R Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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1. Charles Powell
- to see
2. Pl. file
BRITISH EMBASSY.
ROME.

18 March 1985

F E R Butler Esq
Principal Private Secretary
to the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

Dear Robin

Many thanks for your letter of March 4 about President Pertini and the Oxford Encaenia.

I am most grateful to you for explaining the Prime Minister's views so clearly. This will be a great help to me in ensuring that her opinions are not misrepresented.

*Yours ever
Tom*

Bridges

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