

CONFIDENTIAL



SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY
THAMES HOUSE SOUTH
MILLBANK LONDON SW1P 4QJ

01 211 6402

010

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
Secretary of State for Foreign &
Commonwealth Affairs
Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AL

cc PC

CDP 17.

8 July 1986

HANDLING OF COMMUNITY ENERGY MATTERS DURING UK PRESIDENCY

As you know, I have been discussing the handling of energy matters during our Presidency with Commissioner Mosar and Christopher Audland, the Director-General of DG XVII. I am also seeking a brief discussion with M. Delors when he is next in London.

These discussions have of course been dominated by the follow-up to the Chernobyl accident. I know that you share my views on the danger of an open and irreparable split between the 4 pro-nuclear Member States - France, Germany, Belgium and ourselves - and the anti-nuclear States led by Denmark. In the event of an open split, other Member States might be forced by public opinion to adopt anti-nuclear positions.

There are however some aspects of the follow-up work on which it is reasonable to hope Member States will be in general agreement, for example the proposed Conventions on early information, mutual assistance and contamination levels - so long as those are decided on a scientific basis. Since the former is the subject of IAEA work in August, I am hopeful that Member States will then be able to concert positions, though we shall need to take care to avoid sterile disputes over competence. However any attempt now to concert a formal Community position in the IAEA or to adopt Community legislation on matters such as nuclear safety would risk forcing Member States into adopting rigid positions.

The Commission accept that the main focus of discussion will be in Vienna, initially on the draft Conventions on early warning and mutual assistance and thereafter on measures to ensure that safety standards are everywhere of the highest. Member States will of course wish to discuss events at Vienna, not least the post-Chernobyl review meeting scheduled for the end of August. Developing a consensus will however be a long haul and require patient and delicate handling.

CONFIDENTIAL



I intend to start the process by inviting the Energy Ministers of all Member States to an informal meeting in mid-September, an idea which the Commission have welcomed. I have in mind a very relaxed occasion: in the morning I would ask Ministers in turn to describe how their thinking on their national energy policies was being affected by the collapse in oil prices and the Chernobyl accident. The afternoon I would devote to a discussion of how to bring home the financial advantages of energy efficiency to the consumers who have to take the decisions. The promotion of energy efficiency is of course itself an invaluable step in improving the competitiveness of the Community's industries against those of Japan and America and I hope to make improved co-operation in this sphere a major theme of our Presidency. But I also hope that with such a format, nuclear matters would not be seen to dominate the informal meeting and that therefore Ministers would not come to it with their positions on such matters rigidly defined.

In order to support this approach I shall also be seeking bilateral discussions with my opposite numbers in France and West Germany, and also in Belgium (in order to develop continuity in approach between our Presidencies).

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Nicholas Ridley, Michael Jopling, Malcolm Rifkind and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long vertical stroke.

PETER WALKER

