



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

File No
CO2 A04
cc Sir P. Crabs
Mr Ingham
26 April 1985

CHINA: VISIT BY PREMIER ZHAO

Thank you for your letter of 25 April about the request from three senior Chinese journalists to interview the Prime Minister before Zhao Ziyang's visit to the United Kingdom.

Boff
The Prime Minister is prepared to do this but can only spare half-an-hour at 1430 on 8 May. Given the short time it might be helpful if they could submit at least the broad outlines of their questions in advance. You will no doubt wish to provide briefing.

The Prime Minister hopes that Lord Young will also find time for an interview.

I am copying this letter to Leigh Lewis (Office of the Minister Without Portfolio).

CHARLES POWELL

Len Appleyard, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

25 April 1985

Dear Charles,

China: Visit by Premier Zhao

Three senior Chinese journalists, including the Head of the International News Department of the official Party organ, People's Daily, will be visiting Britain from 7-10 May to research articles which will appear in the Chinese press shortly before Premier Zhao Ziyang's visit to Britain (2-8 June). They have asked our Embassy in Peking for interviews with Sir Geoffrey Howe and the Prime Minister. They would like to ask questions on UK-China relations, East-West relations and the European Community.

Sir Geoffrey Howe has agreed to a brief interview. Despite the inconvenience, he thinks there would be advantage, in this particular case, in the Prime Minister agreeing to seeing them also. Premier Zhao's visit will clearly be of major importance for UK-China relations. We have much to gain from sympathetic presentation in China, both in the short term in generating favourable attitudes to Britain as a commercial partner, and for the longer term in influencing China's increasingly outward-looking younger generation. An interview with the Prime Minister, which could be very brief, would be given extensive coverage and would provide a rare opportunity to project her views at first hand to the Chinese people (amongst whom she is popular). Moreover, the journalists will also be visiting the Netherlands and West Germany (also to be included on Premier Zhao's itinerary), and have applied for interviews at a similar level there. If we are upstaged, this could probably be misinterpreted in China as lack of interest.

Our Ambassador in Peking has also recommended that Lord Young should meet the journalists, in view of his recent visit to China. The Foreign Secretary strongly endorses this suggestion and hopes that Lord Young would also have time for a brief interview. I am therefore copying this letter to Leigh Lewis at the Cabinet Office.

Yours ever,
L V Appleyard
(L V Appleyard)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
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