

PRIME MINISTER

FT INTERVIEW, MONDAY, DECEMBER 11

You have agreed to give the Financial Times what they regard as their annual interview on Monday for an hour from 11am. I will accompany you and the COI will record.

I have tried to persuade Sir Geoffrey Owen, Editor, to cut down his party but he still wants to bring along Philip Stephens, political editor, Joe Rogaly, political columnist, and Sam Brittan.

I think he is all the more anxious to bring along the three because he feels that the FT writers do not have much contact with you and this is too good a chance to miss.

I did not feel disposed to fight to the end because:

- (i) the interview has been twice postponed;
- (ii) there is a strong case for letting these particular writers see you at close quarters and giving them the benefit of your direct arguments;
- (iii) I do not think that the proposed format need cause you difficulty if you resolve to be pretty uncommunicative in the economic section of the interview.

Format

The team will want to pursue four broad areas:

- the follow up to Strasbourg, the future of the EC and its approach to Eastern Europe
- economic and financial policy - has it changed since Nigel Lawson left?
- environment and quality of life - your concerns for the future
- has Thatcherism run out of steam? And, where and when, in the light of the last ten years, do you see Thatcherism going in the future?

Economy

Andrew Turnbull is putting separately into your box the Chancellor's recent evidence to the Select Committee which effectively deals with the economic section. You will not want to go further.

I see no point in any reference to Nigel Lawson's recriminations or otherwise. He is in the past. What matters now is to get down inflation, and the economy back on track and to win the next election. That you intend to do. Meanwhile, you do not intend to discuss the details of economic or exchange rate policy. //

In other words, this is a time for determination, perseverance and cool heads. John Major brings these necessary qualities to the task.

Europe

I regard the rest of the interview - Europe, environment and whither Thatcherism? - as an opportunity to get your views firmly on the record in an international - indeed global - newspaper.

I will give you a note about Europe on Sunday when we have had a chance to assess the outcome of Strasbourg and its treatment.

Environment

On the environment I think you should explain to them how your interest was first excited on the topic of global warming and its potential consequences, leading up to the Royal Society speech.

You will want to secure a good deal of credit for having brought environmental issues to centre stage, for advancing ideas for progress, while preventing duplication of institutions. You can emphasise the importance of securing a proper scientific basis for action and take credit for the new centre for the prediction of climate change to be set up in this country.

### Thatcherism

You will not find it easy to convince this bunch of self-confessed superior intellects who think there is an easy way to run the world, but to show that you have not run out of steam, you need bring forward arguments which demonstrate your relevance to a fast changing and potentially more dangerous world.

Let me try this on you:

- As most recent events and circumstances clearly demonstrate what you have always said - that Government life is one long continuing battle to contain inflation and maintain growth. There is no easy fix. Determination and political will will be essential. You are determined to get inflation down. 1990 is a crucial year. Government policies have however put the British economy and industry in a much stronger position in 1989 than 1979. More vigorous, more supple, more enterprising and more successful. But continuity is vital.
- Great reforms to modernise and improve the efficiency of Britain are in train: education, health, social services, legal services. A great deal still to be carried through. Your determination to see reforms through to full implementation is vital.
- The UK, with you, in the lead and often alone, has been the springboard for progress in the Community. Far from lagging behind, we are working constructively for greater integration but in a Europe that is flexible, enterprising, unbureaucratic, and diverse. You are seeking a Europe that is open and has great attraction to other countries of the world.
- In world affairs, Britain has recovered respect. It knows its own mind, because it has thought its way through the issues. In these potentially unstable times this is important.
- Finally, back home, we need in a whole variety of ways, from litter in the streets, through more old fashioned virtues in the home and institutions, to higher standards of behaviour and performance, to improve the look and feel of Britain.

- All that is what Thatcherism is about. All that is what Britain instinctively knows it needs. It will be increasingly relevant in the 1990s.

Content?

pp A Allan  
BERNARD INGHAM  
December 8, 1989

Monday 11 December  
11-12 noon

Anne  
→ Cd you ring Owen;  
Secy & say that date  
we have to go by  
board & Tom [unclear]  
and [unclear] a s a p

PRIME MINISTER

FT INTERVIEW

You have agreed to give an interview to a team from the FT on Monday, November 20 (11-12 noon).

I have informed Sir Geoffrey Owen, Editor, of this provisional date and promised to confirm next week.

I think this will be a useful opportunity to put over your point of view to this rather superior lot.

It is of course possible, indeed I think likely, they will include Sam Brittan in the team. I think it would be useful if he were. After all, the Chancellor's policies, which he espoused, failed.

Content?

I don't think we  
can. That is the  
day we have the  
bank house reception  
11-45 - 1-30  
in line of the dinner  
before the state opening,  
not

BERNARD INGHAM  
November 3, 1989

Sir Geoffrey Owen  
Shilly Stevens  
Joe Rogaly  
Sam Brittan

The Prime of [unclear] is  
coming to dinner. not