

PRIME MINISTER

BILATERAL WITH THE FOREIGN SECRETARY

You have a bilateral with the Foreign Secretary tomorrow. The subjects which he wants to cover are:

- M. Rocard's Environmental Initiative. You are seeing M. Rocard on Wednesday and will need to respond to his invitation to attend the environment meeting in The Hague on 11 March. I imagine that you will not wish to go. His proposed declaration is a mixture of the pious and the impractical; and neither the Americans, Russians, nor the Chinese have been invited. On the other hand most other European countries as well as Japan, Australia, India, and Canada will attend. Your absence will be noted and will be used by your opponents to claim both that Britain is being excluded from a worthwhile international initiative because of your obstinacy: that your commitment to action to deal with environmental problems is not whole-hearted: and that you should have gone if only to argue against the Rocard proposals.

These accusations can of course be dealt with by making clear that you were invited but decided not to go; that Rocard's ideas are impracticable; that other major countries are not attending; and that your commitment to practical action is demonstrated by our CFC conference. The Foreign Secretary may argue that we should be represented at the Conference. I would be against this: first it would make our position less clear-cut, and second it would look as though your non-attendance was based on personal pique. Let's not go and let's explain the reasons why clearly.

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- South Africa. He will want to discuss your suggestion of an early meeting with De Kleerk, possibly before your visit to Africa. I attach my letter on this.

- Gibraltar. He will want to let you have his reflections, following his visit and his meetings with the Spanish Ambassador.

- Nicholas Fairbairn. The Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary are concerned about his intervention in Malaysian affairs and want to warn him off. He is certainly causing confusion. Colin Marshall complained yesterday that Nicholas Fairbairn had telephoned Lord King from Kuala Lumpur telling him not to negotiate any more on air services without discussing it first with him. I further understand that his claim to you that he met Dr. Mahathir in Kuala Lumpur is untrue. In fact he was turned away from the hospital.

C.D.P.

C. D. POWELL

6 February 1989

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