

PRIME MINISTER

*Am reluctant to commit
myself yet not.*

*f.a.
10/3*

SECOND UN SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT

You will recall that Lord Carrington (see letter at Flag A) has recommended that you should visit New York on or about 15 June to address this meeting. You asked for more precise information about the intentions of the German Chancellor and the French President. We now know that Schmidt will definitely go and speak on 11 June. Mitterrand's position is not clear but the French are saying that he will probably go - we must expect that he will.

May I remind you of the arguments.

Arguments against going

- (a) You have a very busy "foreign affairs" programme during June:
- 4-6 June: Economic Summit
 - 7-9 June: President Reagan
 - 10 June: NATO Summit
 - 20/29 June: European Council*
- (b) You will certainly miss Questions on Thursday 10 June. It is still possible that if the current programme for President Reagan's visit is changed, you will wish to consider missing Questions on Tuesday 8 June. The new proposal would involve you being abroad on Tuesday 15 June as well (though if you decided to go to New York we might be able to arrange for a different speaking time which would avoid you missing Questions).
- (c) Any UK speech at the Disarmament Session is bound to disappoint the disarmament lobby in this country since their expectations of the Session are unrealistic. The speech will have to defend our reliance on the deterrent and on the search for balanced and verifiable disarmament agreements against the UN majority's call for nuclear disarmament as a first priority.

Arguments for going

- (a) Lord Carrington and Douglas Hurd believe that a decision on your part not to go will be exploited by the Opposition, will be criticised hotly and at length by the disarmament lobby in this country and will make the Government's current campaign to defuse the disarmament issue less effective.
- (b) There is already quite a head of steam building up. You have received a number of letters from the UN Association, the World Disarmament Campaign and Women for World Disarmament urging that you go. The Churches are likely to join in soon.
- (c) As stated above, Schmidt will go; Mitterrand is likely to. The Japanese, Belgian and Irish Prime Ministers seem certain to go. It remains to be seen whether Brezhnev will. We do not know what the US will do, though it is possible that Vice-President Bush will go.

If you are reluctant to accept the Foreign Secretary's recommendation, you may think it wise to have a talk with him, and perhaps with the Secretary of State for Defence as well, so that you can go over the arguments. It is possible that you could defer a decision for a while, though there would be advantage in pre-empting the campaign which is building up. You will not want a decision to appear to have been forced upon you by the Opposition and the disarmament lobby.

It would in any case be helpful to have at least a preliminary reaction now so that we can judge how to deal with the various letters.

A.J.C.

UN
reference
C

3 March 1982

SECOND UN SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT

Your letter of 24 February and Francis Richards' letters of 16 and 19 February refer.

The Prime Minister has taken a preliminary look at these papers and has commented that she is reluctant to commit herself yet to the idea of attending the Special Session.

I shall now submit to the Prime Minister the draft letters enclosed with your letter of 24 February.

JC

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

24 February 1982

Dear John,

Letters to the Prime Minister on the NATO Summit and the Special
Session on Disarmament (UNSSD II)

Francis Richards wrote to you on 18 February about the intentions of President Mitterrand and Chancellor Schmidt over attendance at the Second UN Special Session on Disarmament. There remain the letters addressed to the Prime Minister by the General Secretary of the World Disarmament Campaign (5 February) and the Director of the United Nations Association (8 February) about the decision to hold the NATO Summit at the same time as the Special Session.

// The Prime Minister may prefer to answer the letters in advance of taking a decision on her own attendance at the Special Session. I enclose drafts which might issue whichever decision she takes.

Yours ever

John Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

19 February 1982

Dear John,

Second UN Special Session on Disarmament

Thank you for your letter of 18 February asking for further information about the intentions of Chancellor Schmidt and President Mitterrand.

We have today received confirmation from our Embassy in Bonn that Chancellor Schmidt will definitely attend UNSSD II and will speak on 11 June. As you know the French are not so open about these matters but the French Ambassador to the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva gave our Ambassador a 'firm indication' that President Mitterrand would go to New York. Our Embassy in Paris have today reported that the French are saying that, while a decision has yet to be taken, it is 'probable' that the President will go to the Special Session.

You may recall that the World Disarmament Campaign and the United Nations Association have written to the Prime Minister (copies of letters attached) accusing her of not giving sufficient priority to disarmament. A positive response from the Prime Minister would be helpful in dealing effectively with such criticism.

Yours ever,

(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Francis Richards', written over the typed name and title.

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing St

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19 FEB 1982



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18 February 1982

Second UN Special Session on Disarmament

Thank you for your letter of 16 February.

B/P
Before taking a decision on this matter the Prime Minister would be grateful if more precise information could be obtained about the intentions of Chancellor Schmidt and President Mitterrand. Can you enlarge on your statement that they "seem certain to go"?

A J COLES

Francis Richards, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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