



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

21 June 1983

Foreign Affairs and Defence: Strategy

I have told both you and Richard Mottram of the Prime Minister's wish to hold a series of meetings at Chequers on 8/9 September to consider the Government's strategy in international affairs.

I shall be consulting the Prime Minister later this week about the details. I believe that she would probably be broadly content with the agenda indicated in the enclosed draft letter. It would be helpful to me to have any informal comments which you may wish to offer on the letter before I show it to the Prime Minister. My purpose in consulting you in this way is simply to arrive at the most sensible possible agenda and arrangements for what could be an important discussion. As you know, the Prime Minister would not wish her intentions regarding this strategy session to be broadcast more widely than is absolutely necessary. I should therefore be grateful if you could confine consultations about the enclosure to the smallest possible number of people. Indeed, I should be entirely content at this stage to have your own personal views and those of Richard Mottram upon it.

BF

A. J. COLES

Brian Fall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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DRAFT LETTER TO BRIAN FALL, FCO, FROM JOHN COLES

CONFIDENTIAL

*Copy Richard Bolton*

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE: STRATEGY

The Prime Minister wishes to hold a series of meetings at Chequers on 8 and 9 September to consider the Government's strategy in international affairs with a view to establishing clear aims for the next few years and considering practical action in furtherance of those aims. I understand that both dates are convenient for the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Defence Secretary.

Subject to any views which Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr. Heseltine may wish to offer, we would propose to organise the following sessions:

8 September

First Session  
(0900-1030)

General Survey of Britain's global interests and priorities. Identification of the principal problems *and opportunities* which may require action by the Government in the next five years.

Second Session  
(1100-1300)

East/West Relations. ~~The nature of the Soviet threat to the West.~~ Britain's fundamental aims with regard to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. A plan for practical action in the next five years.

Third Session  
(1430-1600)

The European Community. What kind of Community do we want?

Budgetary reform.

Beyond the budget - what should we try to achieve in the next five years?

Fourth Session  
(1630-1800)

The Middle East. The Soviet threat. Iran and the Gulf. Significance of Israel for British interests. The Arab/Israel issue. Practical steps to be taken by HMG with regard to the Middle East (not just the Arab/Israel issue) in the next five years.

9 September

First Session  
(0900-1100)

Arms Control and Disarmament.

Review of current position in main negotiations.

Do we need to change the British position on any aspect, e.g. the strategic deterrent? Fresh proposals for discussion with allies?

Second Session  
(1130-1300)

The UK defence contribution in the longer-term (including Defence of the UK base). What are the principal weaknesses both present and foreseeable? What action should be taken to remedy them?

Third Session  
(1430-1600)

NATO's military strategy - scope for change?

Fourth Session  
(1630-1800)

New developments and prospects in military technology.

For

In each session a basic discussion paper will be needed. It should state the fundamental problems to be addressed by the meeting and end with a series of recommendations

/ for practical

for practical action. The exception to this is the paper for the first session on day one, which would be a scene-setting paper for all the following meetings and describe our global interests and priorities in broad terms.

Subject to any views which the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and Defence Secretary may wish to offer on the above, I should be grateful if you and Richard Mottram, as appropriate, could commission papers for each meeting. It would be helpful if these could reach me by 21 July. I shall then consult the Prime Minister again and, subject to any comments which she may have, the papers would then be updated as necessary and made available in final form to participants by Friday 2 September.

The Prime Minister will decide later on who should be invited to each session. It is possible that she will wish to include in one or more sessions persons from outside the Government service. Where possible, therefore, papers should be classified no higher than "CONFIDENTIAL". But where this would seriously inhibit the <sup>preparation</sup> ~~preparation~~ of useful papers, they may be more highly classified and we shall draw appropriate conclusions for participation.

The fact that the Prime Minister will be holding these meetings should be closely guarded so that speculation by the media on their outcome is avoided.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).