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See now my letter
to Mr. Fall.

A.J.C. 27/6.

PRIME MINISTER

Foreign Affairs and Defence: Strategy

You asked that we should have a two-day meeting at Chequers in September.

This is provisionally arranged for Thursday 8 and Friday 9 September.

I shall need to make detailed arrangements in the next few weeks - before people go away on holiday.

I attach a letter which I propose to send to the FCO and the MOD. Are you content with it?

A.J.C.

The Agenda is too big.
We shall achieve nothing.

24 June 1983

East/West - Disarmament
is the big issue and the Middle East
the long-term issue. We should confer it to
those who



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

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. 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)

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? British proposals for discussion with allies?

Fourth Session
(1630-1800)

The Middle East.
British interests.
Arab/Israel.
Iran and the Gulf.
Soviet threat.
Practical steps.

/ 9 September

9 September

First Session
(0900-1100)

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?

Second Session
(1130-1300)

New developments and prospects for military
technology

Third Session
(1430-1600)

NATO's military strategy - scope for change?

Fourth Session
(1630-1800)

The UK defence contribution in the longer term
(including defence of the UK base)

For 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 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 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).

Brian Fall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.