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PM/80/49

PRIME MINISTER

Public Attitudes to Europe

1. Our commitment to Europe is not in doubt, but there is a lack of majority public support for the Government's policies towards the Community. There have been many indications in recent months of a steady deterioration in the attitude of the British public towards the European Community. While the 1975 referendum produced a two-to-one majority in favour of our continued membership, the recent Gallup poll suggested that there might be a two-to-one majority against if a second referendum were held today. Given the trend within the Labour Party, we could face a very difficult situation at the next election unless the tide of public opinion can be reversed.
2. At a meeting on 10 June, which the Paymaster-General attended, OD(E) agreed that we should seize the opportunity presented by the settlement of the problem of our net budget contribution to embark on a sustained campaign to increase public support for the Community.
3. We envisage that the campaign will contain two main elements. The first will be the presentation of such successes as we have already been able to achieve within the Community and the explanation of the broad advantages of Community membership. Preparation of new material to be drawn on for Ministerial speeches and in briefing generally is in hand. I hope that colleagues will be ready to help in this campaign. It will be particularly helpful and effective if a good many of these speeches can come from Ministers who do not have an obvious responsibility for relations with the Community.

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4. The second element will be an effort to secure early progress in the Community on a number of modest, practical measures which will be of interest and value to the man or woman in the street. There may also be steps we could take ourselves which would help to improve the public's appreciation of the advantages of Community membership. OD(E) has accordingly also set work in hand to identify the possibilities and I hope that colleagues will give it a fair wind in their own spheres of responsibility.

5. In due course, we shall also need to consider the presentational aspects of our longer-term approach to the Community when we have developed our thinking on the restructuring of the Community's budget. But I hope that we can begin to turn the tide on the basis of the two-pronged approach I have outlined above.

6. I am sending copies of this minute to all members of the Cabinet, the Minister of Transport and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'C' followed by a horizontal line.

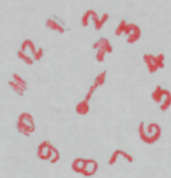
(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

20 June 1980

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20 JUN 1960



QZ 01628

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MR WALDEN

cc Mr Alexander No 10 ✓
Mr Ingham No 10
Mr Prescott PS/Paymaster-General

PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO EUROPE

Following the OD(E) discussion on this subject on 10 June, it would be valuable to enlist the support of Ministers generally for the campaign that is now to be undertaken. Lord Carrington might accordingly care to consider minuting the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues on the lines of the attached draft.

Prime Minister
Would you be content for the FCS
to minute his colleagues on the
lines attached? (The OD(E) papers
are annexed.)

Handwritten initials

Handwritten signature

M D M FRANKLIN
CABINET OFFICE SW1
18 June 1980

PRIME MINISTER

It would be better to send
the attached minute, slightly
amended at Para 3, when we
have prepared speaking material
and are ready to launch the
campaign. This, you will recall,
was the procedure adopted with
the "In the Real World" speech
material.

I think it would be
best to delay this campaign
until we have settled
the Fisheries Policy. It would be
a pity to launch it just as we
are having difficulties in
achieving a fair fish settlement
for our fishermen.

Handwritten signature 18/6

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DRAFT MINUTE FROM THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY
TO THE PRIME MINISTER

cc Members of the Cabinet
Minister of Transport
Sir R Armstrong

PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO EUROPE

Our commitment to Europe is not in doubt, but it lacks the majority public support that is the only sure anchor for the Government's policies towards the Community. There have been many indications in recent months of a steady deterioration in the attitude of the British public towards the European Community. While the 1975 referendum produced a two-to-one majority in favour of our continued membership, the recent Gallup poll suggested that there might be a two-to-one majority against if a second referendum were held today. Given the trend within the Labour Party, we could face a very difficult situation at the next election unless the tide of public opinion can be reversed.

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4. The second element will be an effort to secure early progress in the Community on a number of modest, practical measures which will be of interest and value to the man in the street. There may also be steps we could take ourselves which would help to improve the public's appreciation of the advantages of Community membership. OD(E) has accordingly also set work in hand to identify the possibilities and I hope that colleagues will give it a fair wind in their own spheres of responsibility.

5. In due course, we shall also need to consider the presentational aspects of our longer-term approach to the Community when we have developed our thinking on the restructuring of the Community's budget. But I hope that we can begin to turn the tide on the basis of the two-pronged approach I have outlined above.

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12 JUN 1980
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