



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

27 June 1980

BFF-12-80

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Kempster
H. King

New George,

PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO EUROPE

The Prime Minister has seen the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's minute to her of 20 June on this subject.

The Prime Minister agrees that public attitudes towards Europe in this country have deteriorated and that it would be desirable to halt, and if possible reverse, this trend. She also agrees that material setting out the case for Europe should be available for use in Ministerial speeches and in briefing generally. She agrees, therefore, that the preparation of this material should go ahead. She would like to see it when it is ready.

However, the Prime Minister is not convinced that this is the right time to launch a major Government campaign on Europe. She has observed that there is only a month to go before the Summer recess and that there may well be difficulties in the autumn over the negotiation on the Common Fisheries Policy. She would prefer, therefore, that for the time being it should be left to the discretion of Ministers whether or not they address European issues in their speeches. She would like the question of a concerted campaign to be reviewed at the end of the year.

The Prime Minister welcomes the suggestion that we should try to secure progress on practical matters of direct value to the citizen. She looks forward to seeing suggestions as to the kind of steps that might be taken.

I am sending copies of this letter to Private Secretaries to members of the Cabinet, to Tony Mayer (Department of Transport) and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

Michael Alexander

G.G.H. Walden, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



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10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister.

Owing to a misunderstanding, the Foreign Secretary's minute about a campaign on Europe - which you saw in draft - has been circulated to colleagues. (The Foreign Secretary does not in fact feel very strongly on the question & is inclined to share your scepticism about the results that would be achieved). May I write as in the attached draft?

Yes no And

DRAFT LETTER FROM MICHAEL ALEXANDER TO GEORGE WALDEN, FOREIGN OFFICE

Public Attitudes to Europe

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The Prime Minister welcomes the suggestion that we should try to secure progress on practical matters of direct value to the citizen. She looks forward to seeing suggestions ^{as to} ~~of~~ the kind of steps that might be taken.

I am sending copies of this letter to Private Secretaries to members of Cabinet, to Tony Mayer (Department of Transport) and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).



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PRIME MINISTER

PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO EUROPE

I have read with interest Peter Carrington's minute to you on public attitudes to Europe, and entirely agree that the time has come to go out and canvass positive support for the Community. I for my part will be very happy to take any opportunity to spread the message.

But I would hope that the campaign could contain a third element about the broader aspects of our membership of the Community and its significance - namely human rights and freedoms, defence, and our shared religious and cultural heritage. These are the issues which move hearts and minds, more than technical items, however important.

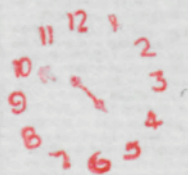
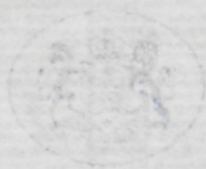
I am copying this to Peter Carrington and Angus Maude.

NSTJS.

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23 June 1980

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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 dark ink, consisting of a stylized 'C' with a horizontal line underneath it.

(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

20 June 1980

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