



File RAMABQ  
C.D. Powell

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

25 July, 1984

VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER OF MAURITIUS

When Peter Ricketts was about to send me over the briefing for this visit, he telephoned to say that it was rather voluminous. It was indeed: seventy-three pages. The Prime Minister has not complained. But that may be because I distilled it for her.

Nonetheless I do think that amount of briefing for an hour's talk with the Prime Minister of a relatively small country is overdoing it. Looking through the briefing, two things were apparent. First it was not tailored to the Prime Minister's particular requirements. It was a mass of briefing provided for all those who would be seeing Mr. Jugnauth during his visit. I quite see that this is labour-saving for those who produce briefs: a bit less for those who consume them. Secondly, it seemed to me that some of the briefs were repetitive and overlapping, that is to say the same points and information appeared in the background sections of more than one brief.

Few of the Prime Minister's meetings with foreign heads of government last more than an hour. She certainly likes to be fully informed for them. But one has also to make a realistic assessment of the number of subjects likely to come up and the depth in which they will be addressed, as well as of the time likely to be available to the Prime Minister to absorb the necessary information. Most briefs meet this need and there have been some very good ones. But this one, and perhaps also that for Prime Minister Seaga's visit some weeks ago, seemed to me excessively long.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Michael Jay (FCO).

(C.D. Powell)

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