

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL



Sir Antony Acland KCMG KCVO
Permanent Under-Secretary of State

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

11 January 1985

C D Powell Esq
No 10 Downing Street

NBPM
Pl. put with other
PPS on this meeting.
CDP
15/1

Dear Charles,

1. I was most grateful to the Prime Minister for inviting me to Chequers last Saturday. I very much enjoyed it, and greatly valued our conversation.
2. I am writing now to follow up one or two points which arose during our talk.
3. During our discussion of financial matters I showed the Prime Minister a graph of comparisons of the various parts of overseas expenditure in cost terms. The Prime Minister noted that it showed an increase in the overseas representation programme in 1984/85 and asked the reason behind this. I said that I would find out. The 'Overseas Representation' PES programme is the cost of the Diplomatic Service at home and abroad. Because of the fall in sterling and higher overseas inflation it had to be topped up in 1984/85 from other FCO programmes (eg slippage on a BBC transmitter project). We also secured a one-off contribution from the central Reserve. But this did not involve any increase in activity. Indeed the diagram understates the reduction in activity over the period because, though expressed in constant UK prices, it takes no account of sterling or overseas prices.
4. Secondly, the Prime Minister said she would like to see Julian Bullard's notes on his visit to East Germany. I enclose a copy.
5. In our discussion of the working methods within the FCO I commented on the long hours which departments frequently work and I undertook to let the Prime Minister see the results of an internal study on the problem. I do not want to bother the Prime Minister with the whole paper but the conclusions, based on a representative sample of 5 departments were that in 4 out of the 5 departments, the range of hours worked, including a lunch hour that is generally notional, was as follows:

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL



Heads of Department: 50-75 hours per week (an average of 57)

Assistant Heads of Department: 45-60+ hours per week (an average of 55+)

Grade 5 Desk Officer: 50-60 hours per week (an average of 55)

6. The study also found that the long hours extended down the scale with less senior desk officers and support staff working an average of 45 hours per week (in one department the registry staff were all voluntarily working a 45-50 hour week). All these figures relate to normal working (conditioned hours are 41 per week including a 1 hour lunch break) and do not take account of extra hours worked at times of crisis or of course of travelling time. Because of high costs in central London a lot of junior staff live quite a way out, so it is a long day and they do not see much of their families during the week.

7. Finally, I undertook to let the Prime Minister see the Daily Press summary prepared by the FCO News Department. We have since had a word about this, and I explained that having looked at the summary again, I did not think that it was quite what the Prime Minister had in mind. It is very much in summary form, and tailored to our own needs. But I enclose a copy for your own information.

Yours ever
Antony

Antony Acland

SELECTION OF TODAY'S PRESS : FRIDAY 11 JANUARY 1985

Arms Control - Further reaction to Shultz/Gromyko talks	All papers: Guardian, FT, DT, Times (3) Economist (leader NS (leader), IHT (4), D Mail, MS
Defence - Chemical warfare, UK position	NS, IHT, D Mail (2), Guardian (2) FT, DT
Atom tests in Australasia	Times, DT, Guardian
Africa - S of S's visit - Namibia	DT, MS
Senator Kennedy's S African tour - more acrimony	DT, Times, FT (2) IHT, D Mail (lead- er + 1), DE, Guardian
Nicaragua - Mr Kinnock's visit	DE (leader) DT, Guardian
Gibraltar - UK/Spain pre-border opening talks	DT, Times