

CONFIDENTIAL

ms

ANDY BEARPARK

22 December 1988

CORBALLY STOURTON

I have received the attached most interesting letter from Corbally Stourton who, apparently, is meeting the Prime Minister in the New Year. As you know, IBM have already put up money for an information-gathering operation on environmental issues and I find Stourton's thoughts stimulating.

It may be appropriate to show this letter to the Prime Minister during the holiday period.

Many thanks for introducing me to Corbally Stourton.

Handwritten note:
Handwritten letter - we
could take action on
some of these things
not

Handwritten signature:
Gey

GEORGE GUISE

Handwritten note:
Prime Minister⁴

Handwritten note:
The attached letter
is proactive - but more
the less worthwhile for that.

Handwritten note:
PAS
23/12

N. E. Corbally Stourton
76 Upper Ground London SE1 9PZ
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PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

George Guise Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

15 December 1988

Dear Mr Guise

Thank you for returning my telephone calls and I am sorry you have a bad back. As we agreed, I have put something in writing but may I stress these are my views and not IBM'S. It is difficult to put something like this on paper to someone one has not met as I do not know the extent of your knowledge of the issues. Nevertheless these thoughts are the basis of a discussion I will have with Mrs Thatcher early in the New Year.

By introduction I should say that many years of promoting the "Sustainable Development" approach (as per Brundtland) has led me to believe that the most difficult people to convince about looking long term are those we think of as more or less educated, intelligent and politically astute. This is, I believe, by reason of the fact that the concept of Sustainable Development questions at first sight the most fundamental ideas, conceived early in life about stability, safety and all the certainties promoted by the dogma and institutions of our education. I do not believe that Mrs Thatcher's advisors have even now properly alerted her to what the scientists (not the alarmists) are saying about life on earth in the 21st Century for between 8 and 14 billion people.

So may I make a few criticism of what the government is doing and then a few suggestions which we might discuss sometime.

Criticisms

1. The government is completely misjudging the speed at which global issues are becoming recognised as important.
2. Ridley is rightly ridiculed by those with knowledge because of his reluctance to communicate in any way that he is interested or cares except about the immediate polluting of this or that. - A short term non-visionary disinterested person - That is how he is seen.
3. One feels the government looks upon Brundtland as socialist dogma. Of course, they all get up in arms and say we were one of the first to acknowledge, etc.
4. The government does not appear to grasp the enormous political opportunities that lie in giving focus to the sustainable development issue - both on a national basis and in an international leadership role.
5. Most people in the government that I have spoken to cannot distinguish between "environmental problems" and the concept of sustainable development and its relationship to economics.

6. The Government's announcement to hold an international ozone conference and support work in advance of the 1990 conference is fine. However, it is seen as a transparent way to say "of course we are doing things" when really they are failing or rather putting off the day when they have to face the issue - human survival on the planet.
7. The Government fears that anything "Green" is going to harm its economic thrust. However, the Brundtland report is a message of hope and Economic Growth and Sustainable Development is closer to hard-nosed economics than any environmental theology.

Suggestions

1. The Government should give immediate focus to the issue of "Sustainable Development". With a couple of relatively small gestures they will have every green vote because at present they are seen not to care; to be reluctantly drawn in.
 - A cabinet committee for Sustainable Development under Mrs Thatcher should be formed and briefed by the key members of Brundtland. (Her present scientific advisers seem unsuitable).
 - A Department for Sustainable Development should be formed. This would take "Green environment" from Ridley and to it should be added ODA and economics units.
 - A cabinet post should be created for The Minister for Sustainable Development.

Such actions would create an immediate focus on the issues.

2. The government should create a Sustainable Development centre. this could be a large establishment such as a stately home and would house, rent free, such excellent organisations as CMC, IIED, ODI, CWDE. Again at relatively small cost the government would be seen to be taking the initiative and giving focus to the issue by supporting the more successful and respected organisations involved with the Sustainable Development issue.

(The UK government forming a Sustainable Development Centre would create much greater international impact than when Canada decided to spend \$200 million on a Sustainable Development Centre in Winnipeg some three months ago.)
3. The Government should form a task force under the Chairmanship of Mrs Thatcher comprising non-government people to make recommendations on the international scene. It should consist of scientists, businessmen, academics and a couple of very young bright people who will still be working in the year 2030. That taskforce should initially visit Canada and study the Canadian government's programme for Sustainable Development.
4. The Government should initiate Sustainable Development prizes to rival Nobel. This could be a 10 year programme starting in 1990 and could be a UK or Commonwealth initiative led by the Queen. The period of 10 years would be seen as the time in which we all have to act if the human race is to survive. The focus would again be creating awareness and prizes would be awarded for that.
5. The Government should set up a Sustainable Development education committee to promote Sustainable Development in the schools and universities.

On reading this through I realise that it needs editing and pruning but I have not time as I leave for the Far East early today. However, you will get the flavour of what I am suggesting, ie that Mrs Thatcher takes a look at the long term future and plays a much greater role in international affairs by becoming a champion of young people and is seen to care about the world they will live in.

Surely it is time for her to change from her short-term economic outlook approach to one of a global citizen who is concerned as indeed she would be if her advisors were more open with her.

Lastly I should add that I am an enormous admirer of Mrs Thatcher and I see great potential if her conviction politics and strong will wer econcentrated on what is clearly going to become the over-riding intellectual issue of the 21st century - human survival on this planet.

Perhaps we can meet sometime. This letter will not be seen except by my secretary, Miss Barbara Leitham, who will type it and sign it for me. She can be contacted on 01-928 1777 Ext 5092 should you wish to get hold of my January movements.

With all best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Yours sincerely
Barbara Leitham

R. N E CORBALLY STOURTON

Dictated by Mr Corbally Stourton and signed in his absence