



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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*May we have a further word. Remember John Nasa's warning - there are so many meetings now - we must have enough time to 'do' the work*

Ria Rivoli

*Here are two separate issues here:*

*- Should we promote a Convention on Climate Change, to be supported entirely by specific protocols? Environment - should we go to the Hague Follow-up meeting?*

The Foreign Secretary has been considering further the ideas for international initiatives on the environment that were discussed at the Prime Minister's meeting on 19 April, in particular the idea of a Convention on Climate Change. He is increasingly persuaded that there may be merit in us promoting such a convention, for two principal reasons:

- (a) It is already part of the international debate (the Canadians and Germans have floated it, and the Americans have shown interest), and it looks certain that there will be a Convention sooner or later. Better therefore that we should take over the idea and develop it as we would wish to see it developed, rather than be faced with having to respond to others' proposals.
- (b) It presents a credible alternative to Rocard's proposals and, if pushed ahead now, could ensure that the French initiative is sidelined.

The Foreign Secretary envisages a two stage approach. First, we would propose a simple framework or "umbrella" convention which would set out general principles. It should be possible to negotiate this very quickly. Later, as scientific evidence accumulates, specific Protocols would be added, containing more specific commitments. (This pattern - a framework Convention followed by Protocols - was of course adopted over the ozone layer question: the Vienna Convention was followed by the Montreal Protocols.) The operation of the Convention and the Protocols could be monitored by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).

Our environment initiative would therefore be two-fold. We would call for:

- (a) The negotiation of an international Convention, to be followed at a later stage by more specific Protocols; and

/(b)



- (b) The strengthening of existing international institutions, particularly UNEP. To these might be added the idea that the Security Council could deal with environmental matters, although we would need to discuss this idea with other permanent members, particularly the Americans, before we launched it publicly.

There remains the question of whether we should attend the 9/10 May Paris meeting to follow up The Hague conference. We now know that the Americans will not attend; the Russians want observer status, but have been told that this is not available. The Foreign Secretary recommends that the Prime Minister should leave it to Mr Lubbers to raise this matter at the weekend. If he does so, as seems likely, she might outline our proposed approach above, and say that we would only go to the meeting if it was open to exploring our ideas.

I am copying this letter to Roger Bright (Department of the Environment).

Yours ever

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