

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

PRIME MINISTER



By chance, you can announce the Govt's decision in answer to an oral Question (likely to be reached - Q4) from Philip Whitehead next

HOME OFFICE

Tuesday. Give the QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

Home Secretary's agreement, 21 November 1980

contact that we should plan for you to do so?

Yes
no.

MS

Dear Nick,

EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

21/n

As you know, Cabinet decided on 13 November that the Home Secretary should announce the Government's decision to renew the United Kingdom's acceptance of Articles 25 and 46 of the European Convention on Human Rights for five years from January 1981 by a reply to an inspired Question.

I was on the point of writing to George Walden with a draft Question and Answer when you told me that, subject to the Home Secretary's views, the Prime Minister might wish to announce the Government's decision in reply to a Question from Mr. Phillip Whitehead, M.P. which she is to answer on Tuesday, 25 November.

I am writing to confirm that the Home Secretary has no objection to the Prime Minister's announcing the Government's decision in her reply to Mr. Whitehead's Question. In consultation with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and (bearing in mind Mr. Carlisle's letter of 18 November to the Foreign & Commonwealth Secretary) the Department of Education & Science, we shall send you a draft reply to Mr. Whitehead and notes for supplementaries.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign & Commonwealth Secretary, the Lord Privy Seal, the Secretary of State for Education & Science, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (to whom I am writing separately about the request from Mr. Fred Silvester, M.P. for a debate on this subject), the Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,

J. F. HALLIDAY

N. J. Sanders, Esq.



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

21 November 1980

Dear Robin,

EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

You wrote to Stephen Boys Smith here on 12 November about the request from Mr. Fred Silvester, M.P. for a debate on renewal of the right of individual petition under the European Convention on Human Rights.

You will see from a letter which I am sending today to Nick Sanders at No. 10 that the Prime Minister is likely to announce the Government's decision to renew the United Kingdom's acceptance of Articles 24 and 46 of the Convention in reply to a Question from Mr. Phillip Whitehead, M.P. on Tuesday, 25 November.

Enclosed with this letter is a draft of a letter which, subject to any comments which the Foreign & Commonwealth Office may wish to make, might be sent to Mr. Silvester on the day of the announcement.

I am sending copies of this letter and the enclosure to the Private Secretaries to the Prime Minister, the Foreign & Commonwealth Secretary, the Lord Privy Seal, the Secretary of State for Education & Science, the Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,

John Halliday
J. F. HALLIDAY

Robin Birch, Esq.

DRAFT LETTER

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE

TO	ENCLOSURES	COPIES TO BE SENT TO
Fred Silvester, Esq., MP House of Commons LONDON SW1 OAA (FULL POSTAL ADDRESS)		Home Secretary Foreign & Commonwealth Secretary Chief Whip (FULL ADDRESSES, IF NECESSARY)

LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
 (NAME OF SIGNATORY)

In your letter of 30 October you asked for time to be found for the House to debate the United Kingdom's acceptance of the right of individual petition to the European Commission of Human Rights before that acceptance falls to be renewed on 14 January. The Government have been giving careful consideration to this issue and have come to the conclusion that it is right to renew our acceptance. The Prime Minister is announcing the Government's decision in reply to a Question by Phillip Whitehead today.

I appreciate that this is a matter to which you and many other Members attach importance, and you have of course raised it in the House on a number of occasions. The Government shares your view of the subject's importance. The decision the Government has now taken raises no fundamental new issue, however, and - as you point out - similar decisions have not been debated previously. Bearing in mind the other equally important demands on Parliamentary time, I am afraid that I cannot hold out any prospect of being able to provide any for a debate on this decision.

21 NOV 1980

