

1. MR. POWELL
2. PRIME MINISTER

CF: pps ppc  
 I agree with Mr. Bardy. It is important to preserve the convention that such messages are confidential, even if the substance is published.  
 CDP 1/2.  
 Please not

Acid Rain: Your reply to the Nordic Prime Ministers

You will recall that the Nordic Prime Ministers sent you a statement towards the end of last year, under cover of a letter from the Prime Minister of Iceland, about air pollution and acidification. The statement was published.

You replied on 11 January (copy attached). The Swedish Embassy have asked whether your reply can be treated as a public document. The Department of the Environment would see positive advantage in this, since your letter sets out very clearly the British Government's case, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office would also see no difficulty.

But I am not sure that you would welcome publication of a message from you to a fellow Head of Government, even in reply to a published statement. Instead, we might ask our Embassies in the Nordic capitals to issue press statements reproducing the main points of your reply.

Content?

Yes please  
 no

Dub

1 February, 1985.



FILE  
RW

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

4 February, 1985

ACID RAIN: PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF ICELAND

Thank you for your letter of 1 February about the request we had received from the Swedish Embassy to make public the Prime Minister's reply to the Prime Minister of Iceland about acid rain.

The Prime Minister wishes to adhere to the convention that messages between Heads of Government are private. She recognises none the less that there may be advantage for the United Kingdom in making public in the Nordic countries the main points of her reply. She would be grateful if this could be done by means of press statements issues simultaneously by our embassies in the Nordic countries.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Colin Budd, with the request that he should take the appropriate action; and also to John Neilson (Department of Energy) and to Henry Derwent (Department of Transport).

SWA

(David Barclay)

A. Allberry, Esq.,  
Department of the Environment.



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*Acid Rain file*  
*CENO*

2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB  
01-212 3434

*B/f to me on Monday pm.*  
*sub 1/2*

My ref:  
Your ref:

1 February 1985

*Dear David*

I understand that the Swedish Embassy have sought permission from your office to publish, in Sweden, the Prime Minister's letter of 11 January.

The Prime Minister's letter was a response to one from the Icelandic Prime Minister which enclosed a statement from the Nordic Prime Ministers. There was no indication that the statement had been published, although we were aware that Nordic newspapers had reported it, or that a public response was sought from the Prime Minister. Further, there was no reason then, nor is there now, to publish the letter in the UK. We therefore offered no advice on publicity when we submitted the draft reply to you.

The request from the Swedish Embassy is slightly unusual, but we see some merit in agreeing to publication, because if the Swedish press discovered that it had been refused they might misinterpret the decision in a way inimical to British interests. And there is nothing in the substance of the Prime Minister's letter which has not already been published in this country.

Whether there would be a minor impropriety in agreeing to publication of a letter addressed to the Icelandic Prime Minister is a point you might consider. Our view is that as Mr Hermannsson wrote on behalf of all the Nordic Prime Ministers and as the PM's reply was clearly addressed to the Prime Ministers collectively, no offence would be given or taken if we agreed to publication in Sweden.

Finally, you might ask the Swedes to inform our Embassy in Stockholm how and when the letter will be published.

Copies of this letter go to Colin Budd at FCO, John Neilson at Department of Energy and Henry Derwent at Department of Transport.

*Yours ever*  
*Andrew*

A C ALLBERRY  
Private Secretary

David Barclay Esq

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Env. Affairs: Acid Rain Pt 3



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