

PRIME MINISTER

c.c. Mr Powell
Mr Addison
Mr Sherbourne

YOUR MOSCOW VISIT - MEETING WITH THE CONSERVATIVE
PARLIAMENTARY FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

You spoke with Cranley Onslow on Monday about whether or not you should go upstairs following your Statement to the House on Thursday, 2nd April about the Moscow visit, to meet and address our Backbench Parliamentary colleagues on the Foreign Affairs Committee. Cranley explained that it would be heartening for the Party, and probably for you, to have a chance to meet in this way in the aftermath of the Moscow visit, and you broadly shared his view when you spoke. But you asked me to check out John Wakeham's reactions to the idea. This I have done.

John Wakeham is neutral about the proposal: his only reservation was that it might raise the profile of the Moscow visit even higher than it was already, and perhaps trigger a major foreign affairs debate in which Kinnock spoke, and you would therefore have to participate.

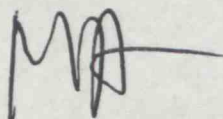
My own view is that you should, in principle, accept Peter Blaker's invitation to visit the Foreign Affairs Committee after you have made your Statement. But this would be conditional upon the Moscow visit having been an obvious success. If the visit proves to be successful, as I am sure it will be, there is very little likelihood of the Opposition wanting to have a major Parliamentary debate on it, with Kinnock leading; and your visit to the Backbench Committee would be in the nature of a celebration: you would not have to say very much, but you could answer a few questions. It would be a

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heartening gathering of your colleagues shortly before the Easter Recess, and it would be particularly welcomed by those colleagues whose meetings with you have had to be postponed as a result of the special pressures on your timetable brought about by the visit.

If your Moscow visit proves to be a much more low-key affair than we anticipate, then there will obviously be no question of your visiting the Backbench Committee and Geoffrey Howe will do so instead. He is, I understand, very happy with this suggested arrangement.

Will you agree in principle to see the Backbench Committee, subject to the provisos I have sketched out above?

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MA' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

MICHAEL ALISON
25.3.87