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PM/83/34

PRIME MINISTER

1) ~~Butler~~

2) ~~Prime Minister~~

cc Richard  
Hartfield 2

The Cabinet Office advise  
me that both these proposals  
are in accordance with  
precedent.

JS

12/5

Use of Official Transport During the Election

1. You minuted on 10 May. I thought I should let you know of my position.
2. On official cars, it is my understanding that my official car with its communications equipment should be on hand throughout the campaign in case of an emergency. In ordinary circumstances I shall however be arranging to ride in and campaign from a private car, leaving the official car to follow on standby. It would also serve to ensure rapid communications between me and my FCO Private Office where this is needed and I would naturally use it if I were recalled to London on official business. If it were thought appropriate in the light of this that any repayment be made, I assume that this would be a proper charge on the Party funds. There will be no question of my using the car for private purposes.
3. As far as aircraft are concerned, I shall as usual be using a RAF plane to take me to and from the Foreign Affairs Council on 24/25 May; and I would propose on this occasion to use an airfield near Cambridge rather than Northolt.

JS

(FRANCIS PYM)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
12 May 1983

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ELECTION: The 1983 General Election  
May 1983



12 MAY 1983

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C(P)(83) 2

COPY NO

10 May 1983

CABINET: PROCEDURE

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USE OF OFFICIAL TRANSPORT DURING THE GENERAL ELECTION

Note by the Prime Minister

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OFFICIAL CARS

During the period of the General Election Ministers may continue to use, for official purposes, official cars provided from the Government Car Service or otherwise; but these cars should not be used for journeys connected with the Election. It is also undesirable that a Minister should use an official car, even on official business, in his constituency, except on an occasion when he is unexpectedly called back from his constituency on urgent official business. Those Ministers for whom the security authorities exceptionally consider it essential may continue to use their official cars on a repayment basis for private or party purposes.

AIRCRAFT

2. Similarly, during the period of the General Election, Ministers may continue to travel by air for official purposes in accordance with the normal rules. However, special flights by Ministry of Defence aircraft may not be made for journeys connected with the Election; there is of course no objection to private charter flights which are not paid for out of public funds. A Minister to whom special security considerations apply would only rarely have to make a journey connected with the Election of such urgency that he would wish to use a special flight rather than his official car, and he should not do so without my express permission. It is also undesirable that a Minister should use a special flight, even on official business, on a visit to his constituency, except on an occasion when he is unexpectedly called back from his constituency on official business.

M H T

10 Downing Street

10 May 1983

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

16 May 1983

Use of Official Transport During the Election

In his minute of 12 May, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary let the Prime Minister know his intentions about the use of official transport during the General Election. You may like to assure him that the proposals in his minute are in accordance with what has previously been considered appropriate. If Mr. Pym was obliged to return from the campaign to London on official business, it would be appropriate for him to use his official car and no repayment would be required.

It would also be in order for the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to use an RAF plane to take him to and from the Foreign Affairs Council on 24/25 May. In the past, Ministers have taken care not to appear to be incurring substantial additional expenditure for the RAF by journeys starting from constituencies rather than from the normal RAF headquarters, but in the particular circumstances outlined in Mr. Pym's minute, there need be no objection to his starting and finishing his journey at an airfield near Cambridge rather than Northolt.

I am copying this letter to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

F. E. R. BUTLER

Brian Fall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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B.R.

1. MR. FLESHER ✓

2. TO BE FILED

R 18/5

ELECTION TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS:

MR. WIGGIN

Clive Whitmore telephoned me this evening to ask for advice about travel arrangements for Mr. Wiggin (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Defence) for two official engagements during the General Election campaign.

Mr. Wiggin would normally travel by Service aircraft and had asked whether he could be collected from and delivered to Bristol, since that was the nearest airport to his constituency.

I said that there were precedents for Ministers being collected from and delivered to airfields near their constituencies, but that these were kept to a minimum in order to avoid the risk of criticism. In Mr. Wiggin's case, I thought that it could be justified (provided that Mr. Wiggin himself was satisfied that there were no particular reasons for expecting it to attract criticism) on the grounds that he is a Services Minister using a Services aircraft to fulfil an official engagement. I said that I would have seen much more difficulty if Mr. Wiggin had been in another Department. Mr. Whitmore said that he agreed with this view.

F.R.B.

17 May 1983