



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's Private Office

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David Barclay Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

19 December 1984

Dear David,

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO SELLAFIELD

In his letter to you of 11 December John Neilson at the Department of Energy mentions that the prosecution of BNFL may not be completed until the end of July.

You will recall that in my letter to you of 8 November, I referred to my Minister's advice that there should be a breathing space of at least three months following the final verdict before the Prime Minister's visit took place. My Minister has seen the recent correspondence and wishes to emphasise once again the importance of such a cooling off period which would suggest that the visit should not take place until at least October. He is hopeful that in the event of the prosecution succeeding, counsels against an appeal would prevail within BNFL so as to avoid additional damage being caused to the public acceptability of nuclear power.

Indeed, in my Minister's view the outlined programme suggested by the Department of Energy does not take adequately into account the importance of using the visit to improve public acceptability. He does not in any way underestimate the difficulties involved. However, he would like to suggest that instead of a grand tour of the nuclear fuel cycle, the Prime Minister might visit Seascale to talk to children and their parents to help dispel anxieties over childhood leukaemia; a CEGB nuclear power station, presumably Heysham, where she could refer to the future contribution to national energy resources of nuclear power; and then Sellafield to open the new plants. There, while welcoming the considerable contribution that the new plants are expected to make in reducing activity levels in the liquid discharges, she could also give a clear warning that the Government and the public expect BNFL to be more vigilant in their day

/to day ...

to day operations and could add that it is in the interests of everyone working at the site as well as of their families that the highest possible standards are maintained.

In addition, my Minister would like to suggest that the day might begin by a visit to the Whitehaven fish market to see fish landed. This could provide not only an important boost to the local fishing industry which has suffered from the November 1983 incident, but would at the same time help to reassure the public about this important pathway from Sellafield back to man.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Neilson (DEn), Andrew Allberry (DOE) and to Dr Nicholson and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Valerie

Miss V A Heathorn
Assistant Private Secretary

PM . visit to Liverpool 9/87



29 DEC 1987



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

31 December, 1984.

Prime Minister's Visit to Sellafield

Thank you for your letter of 19 December, conveying your Minister's further advice on the Prime Minister's proposed visit to Sellafield.

Given the latest timetable for the prosecution, and the undoubted need for a "cooling off period", it might be premature to seek firm decisions from the Prime Minister on the content of her programme. I suggest, if you and other recipients of this letter agree, that we should aim to review the position around the end of March, at which point, if a visit in 1985 still seems feasible, we can seek the Prime Minister's views on the various suggestions which have been put forward, both by your Minister and by the Secretary of State for Energy.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Neilson (Department of Energy), Andrew Allberry (Department of the Environment), and to Dr. Nicholson and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

David Barclay

Miss V.A. Heathorn,
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

18 December 1984

Dear John,

Many thanks for your letter of 11 December. I am most grateful to those who have worked on a possible programme for a tour of the Nuclear Fuel Cycle, and I think that the result promises an interesting day.

Without knowledge of the particular sites it is difficult to be sure, but I am not as pessimistic as you about the heaviness of the schedule. Provided that the pace can be kept brisk, and the formal proceedings kept to a minimum, the plan seems to me feasible as it stands.

I note what you say about the timing of the visit. Clearly, we must continue to plan on a decent interval after the end of legal proceedings. But it is unfortunately the case that the further the date moves into the autumn, the more difficult it is to find room in the Prime Minister's diary.

I should be grateful if you could keep us in touch with the progress of the case. Meanwhile, we will not finally abandon hope of making the visit on 6 August 1985.

I am sending copies of this letter to Andrew Allberry (Department of the Environment) and David Harbourne (MAFF).

Yours ever,
David

David Barclay

J.S. Neilson, Esq.,
Department of Energy.

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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY
THAMES HOUSE SOUTH
MILLBANK LONDON SW1P 4QJ

BFA to me on
18 Dec 1984

01 211 6402

David Barclay Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

11 December 1984

Dear David

You asked for advice on whether the Prime Minister could make a tour of the nuclear fuel cycle on the day she visits Sellafield next summer.

This would give a very welcome boost to the whole nuclear industry and especially to morale at BNFL's sites. It would involve visits to BNFL Capenhurst (enrichment), Springfields (uranium processing) and fuel manufacture), Heysham AGR and Sellafield.

I enclose a rough programme. You will see, however, that the schedule is very demanding with a large part of the day spent travelling and only just adequate time at each plant. You will have a better idea than I of what is likely to be realistic or acceptable to the Prime Minister. If you feel that it is essential to reduce the number of sites either Capenhurst, or probably Springfields, could be left out. Capenhurst is technically a world leader but there is more of the fuel cycle to see at Springfields. Capenhurst has also suffered a number of CND protests because of its military work and there could be a demonstration outside the plant on the day.

We have recently heard that the BNFL prosecution may not start until 5 June. If this is correct, the case is unlikely to be completed until near the end of July. If the case went to appeal, the further court proceedings might take several more months. Whilst we would advise waiting until these dates are confirmed before taking your plans further, at present a visit before September would seem premature.

I am copying this letter to Andrew Allberry(DOE) and David Harbourne (MAFF).

Yours ever
John

J S NEILSON
Private Secretary

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PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

8.30⁴⁵ Leave Northolt
9.20³⁰ Arrive Speke
9.45 Arrive Capenhurst
10.10¹⁰ Tour of Plant
11.10¹⁰ Depart Capenhurst
11.30¹⁵ Arrive Springfields (30-35 miles)
12.00 Tour of Plant
13.00 Depart Springfields
13.15¹⁵ Arrive Heysham (25 miles)
Lunch
14.00 Tour of Plant
15.00 Leave Heysham
15.25¹⁵ Arrive Sellafield (35 miles)
16.00 Open SIXEP/POND 5
Tour of Plant
17.30
18.00 Leave Sellafield
18.20^{18.00} Arrive Carlisle
18.50
19.25 Arrive Northolt

P.M. Sept. 27



visit to Liverpool

ADMIRALTY