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PRIME MINISTER

VISIT TO BRITISH FORCES GERMANY

You are to visit British Forces Germany with Chancellor Kohl on Wednesday. I attach the programme and some briefing notes.

The main purpose is to bring home to Chancellor Kohl personally, and more widely to German public opinion, the scale of Britain's military contribution to the defence of the Central Front. We shall be looking for the widest possible media coverage. There will be about 120 journalists following the visit.

The main items are:

- a short briefing (30 minutes)
- a tour of a YWCA to meet families and open a bowling alley
- a visit to a Sergeants' mess
- a visit to the main ranges to watch a joint British/German tank demonstration. You will meet tank crews and fire a gun
- lunch in the field
- a press conference
- a demonstration by Harriers and helicopters
- interview with the British Forces Broadcasting Service

Chancellor Kohl is bringing a large party including his Defence Minister and local politicians. There may be questions at the press conference about local environmental issues (eg public access to training areas). You may also be pressed by service families on reductions in local allowances. We will have briefing for you.

C.D.P.
CHARLES POWELL

13 September 1986

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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

13 September 1986

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO BRITISH FORCES GERMANY

Thank you for your letter of 11 September enclosing the programme for the Prime Minister's visit to British Forces Germany.

We shall need in addition (I assume you have this in hand: it will require work over the weekend):

- notes on points which the Prime Minister might make at the press conference about the role of BFG and the significance of the British contribution to the defence of the Central Front (ie bull points);
- defensive briefing on local issues, eg environmental, which might be raised at the press conference;
- notes on points which may be raised by service families, eg local allowances, accommodation, etc;
- points which the Prime Minister might try to bring out in her interview with the British Forces Broadcasting Service. I enclose details on the sort of questions likely to be asked and it would be helpful if your briefing could cover them in short note form.

We shall need these by 1700 on 15 September.

C.D. POWELL

Jeremy Wright, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

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LINE OF QUESTIONING FOR BFBS RADIO INTERVIEW

1. Your reaction to what you have seen during your tour in BFG and how impressed you have been by the standard of professionalism within the British Armed Forces in Europe.
 2. The importance of Britain's role within NATO.
 3. How successfully Britain is carrying out its NATO commitment.
 4. Anything you would particularly like to say to British servicemen and women in BFG.
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5. The seriousness of the Russian threat.
 6. How rising costs of weaponry and equipment will determine our future defence policy.
 7. Views on past Conservative leaders.

SEP 11 '85 11:21
FOR THE ATTENTION OF MR MIKE HORNE - PRESS OFFICE
DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER. - suggested questions for TV interview

- x 1. Prime Minister, you have had quite a whirlwind tour today, seeing and hearing about various aspects of BFG, what have been your impressions of your visit today?
- x 2. You had the chance to talk to some of the soldiers and airmen on the ground, what worries or problems did they express to you?
- x 3. Recent cutbacks in LOA and the falling exchange rate between the pound and the mark has made the average serviceman worse off financially and caused a certain amount of resentment among the troops that they are being hard done by. Are you happy that the BFG serviceman is getting a fair deal for his part in helping to maintain and defend NATO here in Germany?
- x 4. What, if anything, are you doing to improve their lot?
- 5. You have just had a meeting with the two Cs in C, did they have any big worries about lack of manpower, resources or morale which were making their jobs as leaders increasingly difficult?
- 6. Just how important do you feel BFG's role in NATO is?
- 7. Do you foresee any major changes to BFG in the future, for example, there has been talk lately of cutting back drastically on the number of British troops here?
- 8. You have spent the day with your German opposite number, Chancellor Kohl, does he have any reservations about the British Forces here in Germany, for example complaints from his voters about the disruption to their lives by such things as exercises, low flying and so on cases?