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*From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO*

Ref: A07511

15th February 1982

Visit to Britain by President Reagan

Mr. Michael Deaver, President Reagan's Deputy Chief of Staff, called on Sir Robert Armstrong this morning to discuss the plans for President Reagan's visit to Britain on Monday, 7th June to Wednesday, 9th June. Mr. Deaver was accompanied by the United States Ambassador, members of the White House staff and Mr. Streeter. Mr. Derek Day and Mr. John Coles were also present.

Sir Robert Armstrong explained the importance which the British Government attached to the planned visit by President Reagan. In the context of the President's other commitments in Europe, and at a time of strains in the North Atlantic Alliance, this visit could demonstrate the strength and good health of Anglo-American relations at the heart of the Alliance. The visit would also provide an opportunity for the President to be seen in another major Western European capital; his presence here could be expected to attract wide attention. Both The Queen and the Prime Minister hoped to make the visit as agreeable as possible for the President. The Prime Minister would also want to use the opportunity of the President's visit to have a full round of talks with him.

Sir Robert Armstrong said that we had been giving much thought to the sort of public appearances which the President might make, and strongly advocated the idea that he should address both Houses of Parliament in Westminster Hall. This would be a central event in the programme both because of the surroundings for such an occasion as well as because of its comparative rarity. In the last 25 years only Sir Winston Churchill and General de Gaulle had addressed the two assembled Houses of Parliament in Westminster Hall. It would provide an opportunity for live coverage by television. We envisaged that the President might address the two Houses late on the morning of Tuesday, 8th June. There would be a State Banquet at Windsor on the Tuesday evening. The Prime Minister would hope to have her talks with the President at No. 10 on Wednesday, 9th June, possibly starting at 11.00 am. followed by a luncheon to which a cross section of

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representatives of British society would be invited. The President could leave the luncheon at 2.45 pm or 3.00 pm to go on to Bonn: there would be an occasion for a camera call at No.10 as he left.

Mr. Deaver asked about the proposal that the President should ride with The Queen in Windsor Great Park. It had been suggested this might be included on the morning of Tuesday, 8th June. But Mr. Deaver clearly thought that this might not be desirable if the President wished to prepare himself for his address in Westminster Hall. It might be preferable for the ride to take place on the morning of Wednesday, 9th June, if this was acceptable to The Queen. He was concerned that a ride on the morning of Wednesday, 9th June might limit the time available to brief the President for the NATO Summit in Bonn. The President's first engagement in Bonn was immediately after his arrival from London at around 5.00 pm. But he was uncertain as to whether this would involve formal talks or whether it would be a social event.

Mr. Deaver said that the President was excited about the prospect of addressing the two Houses of Parliament. He would probably speak for about twenty minutes. Sir Robert Armstrong commented that in all, the event would probably last for about forty-five minutes, since there were also likely to be speeches by both the Lord Chancellor and the Speaker.

Mr. Deaver said that the White House wanted the programme to contain an event when the President could be seen mixing with British people. He wondered whether something could be done at Windsor or during one of the journeys between London and Windsor. Mr. Streeter suggested that one approach would be for the President to go by helicopter to visit Sir Winston Churchill's grave at Bladon. Sir Robert Armstrong said that we very much welcomed the proposal that the President should be seen with the British people. The President would of course be seen when going to Westminster Hall on the morning of Tuesday, 8th June since, having travelled by helicopter from Windsor to Buckingham Palace, he would go by car up the Mall and through Horseguards to Westminster. But Sir Robert Armstrong realised that this would not involve the sort of direct exposure which the White House seemed to have in mind. The best time for this event in the programme might be the afternoon of Tuesday, 8th June. The United States Ambassador said that it might take place in the afternoon after a luncheon which he would hope to arrange for the President at Winfield House after the address in Westminster Hall. The Ambassador also suggested that his lunch might be followed by a meeting with British and European Press correspondents which the President wished to hold. Sir Robert Arms trong added that the Prime Minister's lunch would of course provide an opportunity for the President to meet a wide ranging group of representatives of British society. It was not intended that this should be a political or a working lunch.

Concluding the discussion, Sir Robert Armstrong thanked Mr. Deaver for coming to London to discuss the forthcoming visit. He would be at Mr. Deaver's disposal to discuss further any aspects of the visit on further planning trips to London, or he would be prepared to travel to Washington for that purpose should it be necessary.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Coles.

D. J. WRIGHT

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