

PM Tans
cc Nigeria

Top copy a
PM Tans
Overseas
Travel 1982
June 1981

CONFIDENTIAL ds

13 July 1981

Overseas Travel by the Prime Minister in 1982

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 9 July on this subject. She has provisionally agreed that she should visit China, Japan and Hong Kong in September next year. She has taken note of your proposals for shorter trips. She agrees that the possibility of visiting Nigeria and Ghana should be kept under review though a final decision will depend not only on the state of the Prime Minister's diary but also on how the situation in Nigeria develops.

MICHAEL ALEXANDER

Roderic Lyne, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CONFIDENTIAL *AK*

B/F 1.XII.81



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Are you content that we now
have ~~5~~ more firmly on the basis
of a Far East trip in September
next year with a West African trip
in reserve if opportunity offers?

9 July 1981

Provisionally

you visit 5pm

Hong Kong.

Will wait to see

how Nigeria develops

Dear Michael,

Andy 10/7

Overseas Travel by the Prime Minister in 1982

In your letter of 16 June you sought advice as to how
the Prime Minister might use the limited time available for
overseas travel in 1982.

We confirm our view that the main priority should be
a Far Eastern trip, including China, Japan and Hong Kong.
This would be appropriate for the available period in September
1982. A visit to China could advance important British
interests. No British Prime Minister has yet been there, while
the Heads of Government of our major European partners (except
Italy) have done so. Any trip including China should also
include Hong Kong. The last British Prime Minister to go to
Japan for a bilateral visit was Mr Heath in 1972. Mr Tanaka
returned that visit in 1973. The Prime Minister's visit in
1979 was of course for the Seven Power Summit, and no bilateral
talks were held. Following Mr Suzuki's recent visit here, it
is the Prime Minister's turn to visit Japan. The increasing
political importance of Japan and the seriousness of the world
economic situation argue strongly for an early visit.

Our suggestions for short trips are:

(a) Nigeria and Ghana. These important members of
the Commonwealth have both returned to civilian rule
after many years of military rule. Their
governments are more favourable towards the UK than
any successor regime would be likely to be. The
political and commercial importance of Nigeria in
Africa and beyond is considerable. We have
successfully restored our bilateral relations with
Nigeria to a sound footing over the past 18 months
by dint of direct contacts, including President
Shagari's State Visit and visits by three Cabinet
Ministers to Nigeria. Further visits by junior
Ministers are in prospect but none by any Cabinet
Ministers. There is unfortunately no prospect of
an early return State Visit by the Queen. A visit
by the Prime Minister would greatly help to
maintain the momentum and confirm to Nigeria and
Ghana the importance we attach to them.

/(b)



(b) Spain. Should the Lisbon Agreement be implemented, a visit by the Prime Minister would become highly desirable. The odds seem to be against this happening soon but movement is not impossible if the expected Spanish application to join NATO is put forward.

In addition, the Prime Minister of course has standing commitments, bilateral and multilateral, which will involve short overseas visits during next year.

We should be happy to make further suggestions if required, and would also think it useful to do so in consultation with the Department of Trade.

yours ever
Roderic Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing St