

PRIME MINISTER

These loose folders
found on shelves.
not with speeches,
interviews.

EUROGROUP FILM

You are to record an interview for a NATO Eurogroup film for an hour from 9.30am tomorrow.

This is a film on the European defence effort for distribution in the United States through TV, colleges, clubs and universities. Its objective is to meet a tendency in the United States to belittle the European defence effort. A note covering the purpose and structure of the film is attached (Flag B).

The film - "In Common Cause" - is being made by an independent American producer, Mr Lee Bobker, of Vision Associates. It will include a series of interviews with European political figures, eg. the German Defence Minister and the Governing Mayor of Berlin - full list at Flag C. Mr Bobker attaches most importance to your interview.

The recording will take about an hour though only a few minutes will appear in the final edited version. It will not be a difficult interview and we shall vet the transcript afterwards and reject anything that you do not like. Your interviewer will be Mr Rod Macleish, an experienced American journalist who will aim at an informal dialogue. Mr Bobker will also be present. Normal make-up will be suitable.

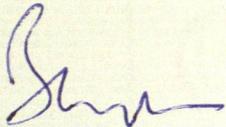
I also attach the transcript of Mr Heseltine's interview for the film (Flag D) recorded on November 14. The producer has stressed that you should not be concerned about any duplication of material.

He adds that you might wish to concentrate on the future of European security within the wider context of East/West relations in general. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office have produced speaking notes on East/West relations and arms control (Flag A). Also attached is a booklet on the contribution which Eurogroup members make to Alliance defence.

The interview gives you an opportunity not merely to get over the extent of the European contribution to NATO - see highlighted bits of Mr Heseltine's interview (Flag D) - but also of our commitment to the Alliance and to the USA.

As the film will have a life of a few years you should try to avoid dating it with references to contemporary events. Instead it would be better to address yourself to the major issues and argue them at a general level.

Agree to be interviewed in the White Room?



BERNARD INGHAM

12 December 1983



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

18 October 1983

EUROGROUP FILM

Thank you for your letter of 14 October urging the Prime Minister to give an interview for a EuroGroup film on the European defence effort for distribution in the USA.

I am reluctant to put this request to the Prime Minister when she has only just turned down a number of media engagements which are arguably of more immediate importance than this. It would have been helpful to have known of this idea, which I note was approved last May, well before now.

Before taking this any further, I need more information on how the proposed film is to be distributed. The questions that arise are:

- is it intended for TV or merely as a visual aid for talks, seminars, etc?;
- if for TV, what guarantees have been obtained that such an official film as this will get airtime?;
- what is the minimum TV audience the film is likely to command?;
- if the film is not intended for TV, what are the proposed outlets - have any speaking tours been arranged - and what is the likely total audience?

Your reference to the Prime Minister's participation (in what appears to be a very loosely structured film) being a major selling point tends to suggest that there is more hope than guarantee that the project would command a large audience.

I should be grateful for your comments.

A. COLES

N.H.R. Evans, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

EUROGROUP FILM

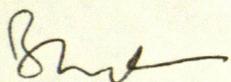
My first reaction to this request is that it is a bit much - especially the short notice and in view of the number of arguably more immediately important interviews we have agreed not to press on the Prime Minister and which she has accordingly declined.

As for substance I have the following observations:

- we have no indication whatsoever as to how the film is to be distributed or what guarantee there is that such an official film as this would command any time on US TV. And if it is not intended for TV its audience will be very small indeed. In short, how is it to be distributed? (All too often films are thought to be a good idea - and the crucial problem of distribution is ignored);
- assuming we can get out of MOD some satisfactory assurances that the Prime Minister will reach an audience of millions, do we wish the Prime Minister to be the only extant Prime Minister to be filmed? I suspect she is included because the producers recognise they will have problems in getting the film shown and she is being urged to go down-market, as it were, to try to save the project;
- would we, even with reasonable assurances, wish to associate the Prime Minister with a possible flop - or with such a crude attempt to educate American opinion?
- can we guarantee that there is any relevant "life" in the film - eg. can we be sure it is not likely to be overtaken by rows over, for example, 3% real growth?

I should add that the format of the film is remarkably loose and catch-as-catch-can.

In short, I am not impressed. We need to ask MOD some serious questions. I attach a draft letter.



B. INGHAM
18 October 1983

DRAFT PRIVATE SECRETARY LETTER

EUROGROUP FILM

Thank you for your letter of October 14 urging the Prime Minister to give an interview for a EuroGroup film on the European defence effort for distribution in the USA.

I am very reluctant to put the request to the Prime Minister when she has only just turned down a number of media engagements which are arguably of more immediate importance than this.

But I do not think I can possibly do so without more information on how the proposed film is to be distributed. The questions that arise are:

- is the film intended for TV or merely as a visual aid for talks, seminars etc?;
- if for TV, what guarantees have been obtained that such an official film as this will get airtime?;
- what is the minimum TV audience the film is likely to command?;
- if the film is not intended for TV, what are the proposed outlets - have any speaking tours been arranged? - and what is the likely total audience?.

Your reference to the Prime Minister's participation (in what appears to be a very loosely structured film) being a major/^{selling}point tends to suggest that there is more hope than guarantee that the project would command a large audience.