

cc Mr Alexander

PRIME MINISTER

James Reston: New York Times

James ("Scotty") Reston, senior columnist of the New York Times, is visiting London between 3 and 5 June and has asked if he could see you on a background basis to cover a broad tour d'horizon of UK and Alliance issues.

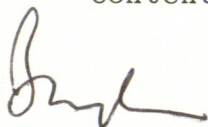
"Scotty" Reston has an interview with President Mitterrand on Monday 1 June and hopes to come on to London to see you and perhaps Lord Carrington as well.

Scotty Reston remains a very influential American journalist and is now the doyen of Washington columnists. His articles are syndicated in the Washington Post, the International Herald Tribune and in no less than 80 other leading newspapers throughout the United States which subscribe to the New York Times News Service.

Niko Henderson recommends that you should try to see Scotty Reston if at all possible at such short notice. Given the perennial apprehension about the cohesion of the Alliance in the United States, current nervousness about the UK defence review and the unusually heavy focus in American media on French and German attitudes, Niko Henderson thinks this would be a good time to get across British policies to an authoritative - and generally well disposed - American commentator. It would also enable you, if you wished, to give a clear account of our policies on Northern Ireland.

As the Italian visit has now been postponed, there is a gap in your diary on Wednesday, 3 June. I recommend that you should see Scotty Reston for a 45-minute unattributable briefing at 5.00 p.m. on 3 June.

Content?



BERNARD INGHAM

29 May 1981

Yes not

RESTRICTED

FM WASHINGTON 282116Z MAY 81
 TO IMMEDIATE F C O
 TELEGRAM NUMBER 1649 OF 28 MAY
 INFO ROUTINE PARIS, B I S NEW YORK.

TELECON HALL/ANSON NO. 10 PRESS OFFICE

SCOTTY RESTON: REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE

1. JAMES (SCOTTY) RESTON HAS TOLD US TODAY THAT HE IS TRAVELLING TO FRANCE TO INTERVIEW MITTERRAND ON MONDAY 1 JUNE AND WOULD LIKE TO PROCEED TO LONDON FOR AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND, IF POSSIBLE, THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON 3, 4 OR 5 JUNE. I UNDERSTAND THE NEW YORK TIMES LONDON BUREAU HAVE APPROACHED NEWS DEPARTMENT (MS STEVENS) ABOUT THIS.

2. RESTON REMAINS VERY INFLUENTIAL HERE. HE ATTENDED THE PRIME MINISTER'S DINNER FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN HERE IN FEBRUARY. HE WOULD, UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED, WISH TO INTERVIEW ON A BACKGROUND BASIS, AND TO COVER A BROAD TOUR D'HORIZON OF UK AND ALLIANCE ISSUES.

3. GIVEN THE PERENNIAL U S APPREHENSION ABOUT ALLIANCE COHESION, CURRENT NERVOUSNESS ABOUT THE REVIEW OF U K DEFENCE EXPENDITURE, AND THE UNUSUALLY HEAVY FOCUS ON FRENCH AND GERMAN ATTITUDES, THE PRESENT WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO GET ACROSS U K POLICIES TO AN AUTHORITATIVE (AND GENERALLY WELL-DISPOSED) U S COMMENTATOR. IT WOULD ALSO ENABLE THE PRIME MINISTER, IF SHE WISHED, TO GIVE A CLEAR ACCOUNT OF OUR POLICIES ON NORTHERN IRELAND. I THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE AT THIS SHORT NOTICE, THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD AGREE TO SEE RESTON (I UNDERSTAND THAT 3 JUNE MAY BE THE ONLY POSSIBILITY).

4. RESTON WOULD OF COURSE GREATLY WELCOME THE CHANCE TO SEE THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND WOULD NO DOUBT BE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN HIS IMPRESSION OF HIS VISIT TO PARIS.

5. F C O PLEASE PASS TO NO. 10.

HENDERSON.

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING ST]

... and

LIMITED
 NAD
 WED
 NEWS D.
 PS
 PS/LPS
 PS/MR RIDLEY
 PS/PUS
 MR URE
 MR FERGUSSON
 LORD N G LENNOX

RESTRICTED