

USA
PRIME MINISTER

cc Mr Coles ✓

PRESIDENT REAGAN'S VISIT - MEDIA

It would be helpful if I could take your mind at this stage on the handling of radio and tv in connection with this visit.

As of now, your only commitment is to brief the Association of American Correspondents over dinner at Brown's Hotel on June 2. This will be an unattributable occasion to enable correspondents to write authoritative articles in advance of President Reagan's visit.

You are not expected to make a major speech on this occasion; instead to answer questions. You could, if you wished, go on the record. But I think it would be more useful to the journalists to brief on lobby terms, and that is what they want.

There will no doubt arise opportunities during President Reagan's visit for both you and him to report to the press on the progress of the visit/talks - eg. outside No 10 after talks and lunch rather on the lines of White House lawn practice.

However, all this merely scratches the surface of US media interest, which is already beginning to build up. The President's media entourage will be massive - literally hundreds - and the demand for interviews overwhelming. We need to decide on an approach and stick to it.

Questions

On the assumption that you make yourself briefly available after the talks and lunch at No 10, three major questions arise - should you:

1. see any top visiting editors of the main journals - eg. Time, Newsweek, etc;
2. separately brief the British press; and
3. give interviews to one or all of the 3 main networks - ABC, CBS and NBC, as you would do if you were in Washington.

The visit will come at an extremely busy time immediately after the Pope's visit and Economic Summit and immediately before the NATO Summit

and the UN Special Session. It will however provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate first hand the warmth of your welcome to President Reagan and to get over the British point of view - and that of a loyal ally - at an opportune time. I attach at Annex I a diary for the period as we know it at present.

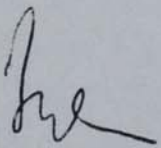
Advice

I do not think you should see the British press, and given the weight of the diary, I do not recommend you to make yourself available to visiting editors unless you find yourself with spare time, which is unlikely. (I could bring in one or two visiting editors to see you at short notice).

There would however be advantage in giving interviews to the 3 main networks. In the USA you have done one or two each morning of your time there.

Because of the time difference, a live broadcast in the USA would take place around noon. You could however record earlier in the morning.

Content for me to explore the possibilities of interviews with ABC, CBS and NBC for their morning shows immediately before or during President Reagan's visit?



B. INGHAM

23 March 1982