

*Prime Minister has seen.**A J C. 9/3
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MR COLES

As I told you, during the course of the American Ambassador's dinner in honour of Sir Michael Palliser yesterday evening, the Ambassador took me on one side to discuss whether he should approach Mr Foot about the matter of President Reagan's address to Members of both Houses of Parliament in June.

2. The Ambassador rang up at 12.20 pm today to say that he had spoken to Mr Foot on the telephone. Mr Foot had been easy to talk to, but his position appeared to be unchanged.

3. According to the Ambassador, Mr Foot said that the Labour Party did not wish to blame the United States on account of the leak. The argument was one between the Labour Party and the Government in this country. The Opposition was upset that they had not been consulted by the Government before the Westminster Hall proposal was put to them; irrespective of the failure to consult, they were upset about the idea, and did not think that President Reagan, at this early stage of his Presidency, was deserving of such an accolade. They hoped that it would be possible to discuss other ways of welcoming and honouring the President in the course of his visit. Mr Foot concluded by saying that his line was open to the Ambassador at any time; perhaps they could usefully talk after tomorrow's meeting of the Shadow Cabinet.

4. The Ambassador speculated about what the Opposition might have in mind about "other ways of welcoming and honouring the President". I said that reports which I had seen in the press suggested that they might propose that, if the President were to address Members of both Houses of Parliament, it should be done in the Royal Gallery rather than in Westminster Hall.

5. The Ambassador emphasised his willingness to do anything that was thought helpful in this situation.



6. I am sending copies of this minute to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Lord President.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

*(Drafted by Sir R Armstrong
& signed on his behalf.)*

9th March 1982