

File 0A



**10 DOWNING STREET**

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

29 November 1985

**1986 TOKYO ECONOMIC SUMMIT: VIDEO CONFERENCING**

Thank you for your letter of 26 November about the possibility of a free video conferencing service between London and Tokyo for the 1986 Economic Summit.

The Private Office here see no value in this conferencing system. But Bernard Ingham believes that it could have some value for press briefing services and I attach a copy of his minute which explains this.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Rachel Lomax (HM Treasury), Len Appleyard (FCO) and to Miss S. Waghorn (FCO).

**N. L. WICKS**

**C. K. Davies, Esq.**  
**Cabinet Office.**

c: Mr Powell

MR WICKS

TOKYO: VIDEO CONFERENCING

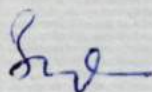
I think two distinctions have to be drawn - conferencing of a confidential nature; and public statements.

Video conferencing, as envisaged in the attached, is merely a visual extension of the radio telephone link-up which the COI now achieves. But it would be an important extension in two senses:

- it would, as I understand it, permit questions to be put from London to anyone giving a briefing; at present the telephone link up does not cut people at the London end into a conference
- the ability of journalists to see the whites of Ministerial/Private Secretary eyes is important itself in communication terms.

I see attractions, on Japanese soil, of a video link up provided free - and provided it works and does not prove a constraint on operations: ie provided all that needs to be done is to tell people in London that within the next hour we shall be briefing down the video line.

It goes without saying that the video facility is not essential; but it would give BT a technological boost with the media if it operated the system from a Japanese Summit.



BERNARD INGHAM

29 November 1985

Mr. Wickes

The temptation is to suggest  
that the PM should stay  
here & attend the summit  
only via video conferencing!  
Otherwise I cannot  
see any value in  
this except perhaps for  
her press conference.

26/3151/23

See Distribution

CDD  
20/ki



CABINET OFFICE

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1. Deputy Clerk  
PC cc Mr Ingham

Any views?

2. Mr. Lawell.

I do not see it

26 November 1985

would be of great value  
to us, (and possibly  
some disvalue!). What do  
you think?

N.L.W.

27.11

1986 TOKYO ECONOMIC SUMMIT: VIDEO CONFERENCING

The attached copy of a letter from British Telecom International (BTI) offers the possibility of a free video conferencing service between London and Tokyo for the 1986 Economic Summit.

2. Video Conferencing is not new and BT has provided studios in major cities in the UK for a number of years, but continuing technological advances have made the service easier to provide and now international boundaries can also easily be crossed. Satellites provide high communications capacity, video signals can be digitized (making encryption possible), compression techniques increase the number of channels, the sensitivity of video camera equipments have improved, and studios can now be set up within a conventional office. PTTs, with more systems capacity available, are seeking to maximize utilisation - hence profits - and are trying to promote an interest in this new and perhaps lucrative market. On the other hand, the benefits may not be all one way: video conferencing can be a rapid method of briefing and can save time and money in travel. These potential benefits have aroused considerable recent interest within departments (particularly those concerned with dispersal) and the FCO propose to use video conferencing between London and Brussels whilst the UK holds the EC Presidency in 1986. There may be UK commercial advantage also in supporting BT in this venture.

3. In considering a response to this initiative from BTI, there are a number of points which would need to be addressed: on what basis would the studio facility in Tokyo be offered (perhaps on some kind of shared basis); but more importantly, how would (unclassified) video conferencing fit in with UK plans for the Summit.

4. I shall be grateful for your comments on whether we should declare an interest in video conferencing for the Tokyo Summit.

C.K. Davies

C K DAVIES

Distribution

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PS/Chancellor of the Exchequer  
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Your Reference

Our Reference **GS2.1/CABOFF**

Date **11 November 1985**

*Dear Ken,*

**1986 TOKYO ECONOMIC SUMMIT VIDEOCONFERENCING**

Our Japanese PTT partners have proposed the provision of a videoconferencing link to Tokyo for the duration of the above Summit. A similar service is being offered by the Japanese to the other participating nations. The extensive benefits and advantages have been established at our recent international videoconferencing demonstrations in which various Government personnel played an active part and indeed have shown a keen interest.

If BTI decide to participate, we would offer this as a free service to potential customers for meetings to further our demonstration programme, probably from one of our public studios in London. However, before we proceed with what is quite an involved exercise, we would like an indication from the various parties with an interest at the Summit (ie Governmental, Broadcasting, Press etc), as to the likely of utilisation of such a facility.

Could I please therefore ask you to consider the potential scope for use of the videoconference facility for meetings between Government Officials and members of the UK delegation to Tokyo.

Yours sincerely

*Terry Brett*

TERRY BRETT  
SALES MANAGER

