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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

23 May 1986

INTERVIEWS WITH THE GERMAN MEDIA

Thank you for your letter of 22 May conveying the Foreign Secretary's hopes that the Prime Minister will consider using the State Visit by President von Weizsaecker in July and her own visit to Germany in September as pegs on which to hang major interviews.

I have discussed this with Bernard Ingham and we both agree that there is no prospect of the Prime Minister being able to find the time for ARD Television in June. There are simply too many other commitments, and we need to give priority to interviews for the domestic audience.

The prospects for September are better and I will put the proposal to the Prime Minister. But it would be helpful to know, before doing so, whether you would give priority then to the television appearance or the interview with the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.

Charles Powell

Colin Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

22 May 1986

Dear Charles,

Interviews with German Media

The Foreign Secretary hopes that the Prime Minister will consider using the State Visit by President von Weizsaecker (1-4 July) and her visit to Germany for the Anglo-German Summit and visit to BFG (16-17 September) as pegs on which to hang major interviews.

The State Visit in particular will offer an opportunity to reinforce public appreciation of a relationship whose profile does not always match its quality. We recommend that the Prime Minister take up the proposal for a "Face the Press" interview offered by ARD (first German TV channel). This would be conducted by three journalists, and cover the range of key political issues underlying Anglo-German relations, including defence relations, Community matters and economic prospects. It would be broadcast on the evening of Sunday 29 June, immediately before the State Visit beginning on 1 July, and last around 30 minutes.

The primary purpose would be to balance the coverage of ceremonial, which the visit is sure to generate, with a more political element. On the eve of our EC Presidency the Germans should be receptive to a message about the role of Britain and Germany in Europe. It would be assured an especially wide audience, given the public focus on Anglo-German relations in advance of the State Visit, and should receive further coverage in the domestic press.

In the case of the Prime Minister's visit to Germany in September, the Embassy recommend that we give priority to the most important and influential independent national daily in the FRG, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ). Its political orientation is centre right; it is well disposed to the UK; and there is the additional advantage that it is close to Kohl and the CDU. It is the FAZ's editorial policy not to publish interviews verbatim, but as the Prime Minister's recent interview with The Times showed, a narrative format can be just as effective.

Yours ever,
Colin Budd

(C R Budd)

Private Secretary

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