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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

18 May 1983

Dear John

Anti-Americanism

As you know, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary is concerned about the growth of anti-Americanism in Britain, and indeed in Western Europe generally, during recent months. Although not a new phenomenon, it is more widely and more strongly evident now than at other periods since the war, except possibly the Suez crisis. It also extends to more issues, the nuclear question being only the most prominent. Mr Pym thinks it would be unsafe to see this as a passing phase.

In a telegram at the beginning of May, Sir O Wright suggested that the visit of Mr Meese should be used to 'clear the air' on this subject. It was touched on by implication during the Prime Minister's talk with him, and Mr Pym spoke to Meese in detail about the difficulties caused to Britain by some American statements and actions on arms control, relations with the Soviet Union, extra-territoriality and the anti-trust proceedings against British Airways. (This list could be lengthened.) Mr Meese gave a different explanation in each case, but he seemed to understand that the various examples could not but be connected in British eyes.

The Prime Minister may wish to bear this general problem in mind during the Williamsburg Summit. The American Embassy are well aware of the anti-Americanism there is in this country, and have reported it fully, although it is doubtful how many of these reports will have reached the White House. The President himself may be more conscious of the converse phenomenon of anti-Europeanism in the United States, resting mainly on the presumption that the European Allies are soft on Russia and not doing enough for their own defence.

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Various suggestions have been offered. One is that a special conference be held at Ditchley Park on European perceptions of the United States and vice-versa. Another is that the Prime Minister and the President (or perhaps Mr Pym and Mr Shultz) should each designate a trusted senior official to sit down together in private, look at the problem of our mutual perceptions, and produce joint recommendation.

Mr Pym is not sure how far the Prime Minister will want or be able to pursue this subject at Williamsburg, now that the day in Washington has been cancelled and her private talk with the President reduced probably to about an hour. It might in any case be difficult to go into great detail with him without touching on the question of his own personal image in Britain, which is very much part of the problem. But the President's idea for a greatly expanded programme of youth exchanges between America, Europe and Japan is likely to be mentioned at Williamsburg, and this may give the Prime Minister or the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary the opportunity to say something about the bad state of mutual perceptions and the need to do something to improve them.

The biggest single improvement, in Mr Pym's judgement, would be a resolve on the part of the US Administration not to spring surprises on their allies as they have so often done in recent months; and an understanding that consultation on all subjects in future will be as exemplary as it has been on the question of INF deployment.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Lawson
Fia

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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cc Mr. Jackling

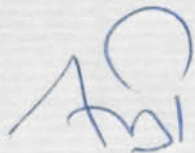
MR. COLES

ANTI-AMERICANISM

I have seen a copy of Brian Fall's letter of 18 May. This is a subject which I have discussed on two or three occasions recently with Antony Acland and Julian Bullard.

As the Prime Minister knows from my discussions with her and one or two notes I have sent down, I very much share the anxiety of the FCO on this subject. In particular, I have felt for some time that our dialogue with the White House is not as close, continuing and effective as it ought to be. This is mainly because of the difficulty of finding anyone with whom it is possible to have a serious conversation in the White House staff. By contrast, I have a feeling that our relationship with the State Department is about as good as it could be.

I am, therefore, attracted by the idea of the Prime Minister and the President each designating a personal representative to sit down together in private, look at the problem of our mutual perception, etc. I am less enthusiastic about the Ditchley Park idea. These get-togethers are all very well but their results are ephemeral and everyone tends to go away thinking that they have achieved something, whereas in a month or two's time any effect of the meeting has evaporated.



A.D. PARSONS
19 May 1983

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