



31 March 2009

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE 0906-08

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office received a request under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) in which the requestor asked for;

“Details of communications between FCO officials relating to the Prime Minister Gordon Brown’s visit to the United States in April 2008, include the British Ambassador’s report to the FCO in London on whether the visit was successful or otherwise.”

Release

Information relating to the Prime Minister Gordon Brown Visit to the USA in April 2008

E-mail of 2 April from Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy Washington to Economic Counsellor

Title: Outline programme for Visit 16 April

(Name Withheld)

Fine, we’re dropping the themes from what we send back.

(Name withheld)

E-mail of 2 April from Economic Counsellor, British Embassy Washington to Embassy staff

Title: Outline programme for visit 16 April

(Name withheld)

I am happy for you to send an email to London to get steers on the choreography of New York leg.

On the **banking/financial event**, I think the participants and venue ideas are spot on. However, I don't think the framing of the *themes* is right. The primary purpose of the PM meeting Wall Street people is to discuss the current financial/credit market turmoil and the appropriate responses -- both from government and from the private sector actors themselves (e.g. in being transparent about their losses). This is clear from the Prime Ministers own statement on his visit (see below) and from

discussions I have had with London about Jon Cunliffe's preparatory calls in the US this week. With this in mind, I would put the themes as:

1. The outlook for the global economy and financial markets
2. How the international community can work together to achieve stability and growth in the global economy (building on the preceding discussions at the G7, IMF/World Bank and Financial Stability Forum meetings that will have taken place in Washington the week before)
3. Longer term reforms that will help strengthen the international financial system (including the Prime Minister's initiative on the IMF as an early warning system but also regulation of ratings agencies, how to deal with supervision of cross-border entities etc)

So it is, in a sense, an opportunity for the Prime Minister to engage with senior Wall Street figures on one of the leading policy issues of the day - namely how to respond to the (global) credit crisis and how to draw the right lessons for the longer term, including how we can work together across the Atlantic to deal with these challenges.

(Name Withheld)

PM's Press Conference -- today

"When I visit the United States I will be talking obviously about the international economy and I believe that we can work together very closely to deal with some of the problems that have arisen from the off balance sheet financial activities, the need for write-offs, the need to reform the credit rating agencies, and the need to show that the international community is working together to achieve stability in the world economy. I think we have got a lot to learn from each other and I think Europe and America must work very closely together to show that the economy is going to be both stable and put on a path to higher growth in the next few months."

Counsellor (Economic)
British Embassy, Washington DC
(contact details redacted)

E-mail of 2 April from Head of Political Section British Embassy Washington to Embassy staff

Title: Outline programme for visit 16 April

(Names Withheld)

Impressively quick work. (Name Withheld) is talking to Nigel right now.

In terms of going back to London, I had asked (Name Withheld)(copied in) to send a consolidated draft programme - including NY. But I think it might actually be best if:

- (Name Withheld)

sends the latest DC/Boston version overnight

- you/ (Name Withheld) send your email below (or an edited version of it) back separately

- tomorrow, we consolidate everything

Hope that's OK, (Name Withheld)

. (Apologies - I have to dive out.)

(Name Withheld)
Head of Political Section
British Embassy, Washington
(Contact details redacted)

E-mail of 2 April from Economic Counsellor, British Embassy Washington to Embassy staff

Title: Outline programme for visit 16 April

(Name Withheld)

As I will be in London all next week, please copy all correspondence on the economic/financial aspect of the NY programme (bankers/hedge fund event) to (name withheld) (First Sec Econ) here who will cover here in my absence.

(Name Withheld)

PS I will be in Whitehall on Tuesday and Wednesday, so if it would help for me to make any calls on this visit (e.g. to press for answers/steers), do shout -- though I sense that it is all more than in hand.

(Name Withheld)
Counsellor (Economic)
British Embassy, Washington DC
(contact details redacted)

Letter from Sir Nigel Sheinwald to Embassy staff: 18 April 2008

Title: Prime Minister's visit to New York and Washington

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK

1. The Prime Minister has asked me to thank everyone for their help with his visits this week, which was a great success.
2. We packed a huge amount into his programme – meeting the President, separate meetings with the three candidates, a large reception to meet senior people from all parts of Washington life, an event promoting the Millennium Development Goals, and

private meetings with Federal Reserve Chairman Bernanke and Former Chairman Greenspan. Plus a series of UK and US media engagements.

3. In New York where the Prime Minister had a lively discussion with a high level group of Wall Street bankers, and met Mayor Bloomberg.

4. All this required a huge amount of preparation and organisation by the Embassy and by the Consulate General in New York (...redacted). It was a real coup, recognised even by the British media, to have bagged them all – many congratulations to (name withheld) and the Press and Resident teams for arranging the meetings with what the Guardian called “military precision”. And congratulations also to (name withheld) for constructing a very worthwhile MDG event in only a few days, with the able support of the Public Affairs Team.

5. As usual this was a great team effort, very visible for example at the reception. I was very proud of the way everyone pulled together to produce an excellent result. **Thank you.**

6. I have written separately to the Residence staff.

E-mail from Consul General Boston to Head of Political Section British Embassy Washington: 27 February

Title: PM Visit(Boston)

(name withheld)

Thanks for sight of this: the one action point for Boston from below is - invites to the post-speech lunch at the Kennedy Library

(redacted)

I shall let you have some other names: I trust close of play tomorrow (Thursday) is ok, ahead of the Friday visit meeting

Of the two options still in play for the Friday afternoon, either would work well:

(Redacted)

- an MIT event, in the possible category: i continue my separate talks with MIT about the UK Office which could still be launched, either at MIT, or perhaps at the British Consulate overlooking MIT... This'd be preferable as separate from the Library event...

Thanks for putting in a word for me: I do need to be in the UK on Sat. 19 April, but this current timing (though tight) would work. I'm down in DC next week (for PSG training), so am available if further chats are required

(name withheld)

Telegram from British Embassy Washington

Subject

Confirmation copy: PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE US, 15-18 APRIL 2008: MDG MEETING: Id=9278797

Summary

Meeting on MDGs with a range of key US actors on development: business, faith, NGO, Administration and Congress. The Prime Minister sets out the background to the call to action, and calls on all to help make the September high-level meeting a success. Main issues in the discussion include trade, reform of the US development assistance architecture, food prices and various other sectoral issues.

SIC

1. The Prime Minister had a meeting on the MDG call to action on 17 April, during his trip to Washington. Chaired by David Lane (CEO, ONE Campaign), the meeting brought together the Administration's key development officials (Fore from USAID, Dybul from PEPFAR and Danilovich from MCC), Congresswoman Nita Lowey (Chair of the House Committee responsible for appropriating development funds) and senior staff from NGOs (OXFAM, Care, Africare, Save the Children and Bread for the World), business leaders (from Microsoft, Goldman Sachs and Caterpillar), faith leaders and journalists (including Tom Friedman, Michael Gerson and Sebastian Mallaby). We also invited two student activists from George Washington University, who had been leading ONE's campus campaign.

2. The Prime Minister set out the background to making 2008 the Year of Action on the MDGs. Halfway to 2015, progress had been made, but the MDGs would not be achieved unless something big happened. He set out the four strands of action for 2008: the business meeting on 6 May; the European Council in June - where EU leaders would need to "change course" to meet their own commitments; the G8 summit in Japan, which the Prime Minister hoped would see an even greater development focus than currently envisaged; and the 25 September UN meeting. The Prime Minister said the UN meeting should not just be about speeches by political leaders, but also involve businesses, faith groups and NGOs. He had asked Mayor Bloomberg in their meeting if he would sponsor a New York public event to coincide with the UN meeting.

3. The Prime Minister said he had raised development policy with the three Presidential candidates that morning, and had been reassured that it mattered to all of them. He then set out a series of priorities, on which he wanted to see initiatives worked up for the UN meeting, in partnership with business, NGOs, faith groups and other governments: Education for All, where the prime minister highlighted the agreement at the UK-France summit, and called for others to match our commitment; health, in particular healthcare capacity, malaria and maternal mortality; and food prices, where he set out the plans for the London meeting.

4. The Prime Minister recalled the Marshall plan and said a similar degree of urgency now could make a huge difference in achieving the MDGs.

5. The following discussion saw some key themes emerge:

(...redacted)

- Food: David Beckmann (Bread for the World) stressed the need for reform of agricultural subsidies in the context of food prices - the forthcoming Farm Bill was vital. He also called for Congressional action on Bush's aspiration to source a greater proportion of US food aid locally. Coles (Africare) said the sectoral focus on HIV/AIDS and malaria had diverted precious development resources from assistance to boost agricultural production in developing countries. Coles and Birdsall both criticised the effect of biofuel subsidies. Lyons (Oxfam America) said that the coincidence of high energy and high food prices risked setting back the progress the international community had made on debt relief.

- Trade policy: Bill Lane (Caterpillar) said his company did the vast majority of its business with rich and middle income countries; they knew that to fulfil their potential, they had to allow the rest of the world to start participating in the global economy. He pointed out that the US gave \$80 million in aid to Bangladesh, but collected half a billion dollars in tariffs. The EU and US had the highest trade barriers; we needed to stop taxing the poor. Similar points were made by a number of participants.

- A focus on sectoral issues: in particular maternal mortality (from Sarah Brown and the White Ribbon Alliance) and Malaria. Gene Sperling (Center for Universal Education, Brookings and an economic adviser to the Clinton campaign) set out the importance of achieving universal primary education. He called for education to be made the focus of a big initiative by the next President, on the same lines as Bush's initiative on HIV/AIDS with PEPFAR. Mallaby proposed used innovative financing mechanisms to front load education funding. Dina Powell set out Goldman Sachs initiative to provide business education to 10,000 women, predominantly in Africa. Coles said we should not forget clean water and sanitation. Friedman thought the rest of our development priorities would founder without focus on "clean, cheap, sustainable" energy for developing countries.

- The Millennium Development Goals: Worthington said the coalition of NGOs that made up InterAction had made a policy decision to organise themselves around the MDGs. A number of the NGOs present commented after the meeting that they had been enthused by the Prime Minister's call to use 25 September to raise public attention on the MDGs.

- And the Pope: Colecchi (US Conference of Catholic Bishops) said the Pope had raised the significance of development policy with Bush. He set out the role of faith groups like the Catholic church, not least because of their local roots. He applauded the PM's focus on building broad coalitions for development, saying that good development policy was always rooted in civil society participation.

6. The Prime Minister summed up. He recognised the link between development and security, using the same anecdote of the dilapidated school in Abuja next to a Madrassa which he also used in the Boston speech the following day. And he responded to the comments on trade policy. Political leaders had to make the case

that globalisation could be to the benefit of all. He thought it possible to achieve a trade deal which involved a commitment by developing countries to fight corruption and adopt policies conducive to growth, in return for liberalisation and aid flows linked to the MDGs. He hoped business could look beyond what they did as charity, and focus instead on how they could contribute to achieving the MDGs through their core business activities. He welcomed the enthusiasm for the MDG call to action, and hoped that faith groups and NGOs could put their energy and expertise into making 25 September a public success, and to create even greater public momentum.