



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Press Secretary

1 July 1985

Dear Charles,

I do not often complain about reports - great though the provocation sometimes is. But Ian Murray's report of the European Council this morning contains a disgraceful inaccuracy.

I did NOT, repeat not, say of the Prime Minister: "She has but one emotion, fury. The Richter scale ceases to operate when applied to her. It is not irritation to the Prime Minister. It is total volcanic eruption. Krakatoa has nothing on it."

What I said - and of course this is much less dramatic - was that the Prime Minister was irritated by the goings on in the Council. But having admitted she was irritated, I knew how she would then be portrayed by the media. The media allow her but one emotion - fury. The Richter scale then ceases to operate. She is not permitted to be irritated. Irritation becomes a volcanic eruption. Krakatoa has nothing on it.

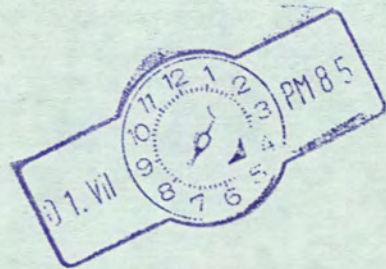
In short, I was taking the mickey out of the media.

I should add that the unattributable guidance terms on which we give our briefings are - and were in Milan - clearly stated. Your reporter does not seem capable of getting much right.

John Smeeth
Bernard Ingham

BERNARD INGHAM

Charles Douglas-Home Esq
Editor
The Times



Mr Flesher



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Press Secretary

2 July 1985

Dear Mr. Heath,

Your remark on the radio this morning that I would have been better advised to keep my mouth shut in Milan may have been based on inaccurate reporting in the Times of what I actually said.

My letter of yesterday to the Editor of the Times, who has not so far published it, and a cutting from today's Mirror (both enclosed) put the matter in perspective.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Ingham

BERNARD INGHAM

The Right Honourable
Edward Heath MP

WRONG AGAIN, TIMES

THE Times, once a distinguished journal of record, has once again got it so dreadfully wrong that they have received a stinging letter of rebuke from Downing Street.

Reporting Mrs Thatcher's reaction to her EEC setback, The Times quoted her spokesman, Bernard Ingham as saying: "She has but one emotion — fury. The Richter scale ceases to operate when it applies to her. It is not irritation to the Prime Minister. It is total volcanic eruption. Krakatoa has nothing on it." Totally wrong. What Mr Ingham had said was: "I know what you will say. What you will say is ..." And he proceeded, with heavy irony, to give a parody of a press report — which the poor old Blunderer promptly printed.

Worse still. This was an unattributable briefing, so The Times also broke all the rules to get their story wrong.

Now Mr Ingham has written to Times editor Charles Douglas-Home. This time, we are reliably informed, it's a real volcanic eruption.
