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## A BRIEFING AT THE BRITISH COUNCIL

Recorded at the British Council offices in London. A university professor is about to leave on a trip abroad.

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- of course you've been out there before so unless you want a list of radio frequencies for the BBC world service or a sheet of handy phrases in the local lingo there's not much I can actually tell about conditions on the ground – though I don't need to tell you that they can change very quickly even if some essentials never seem to change – of course this isn't really my country I'm actually Italy though I did do Turkey for a while but the person you really want is abroad at the moment – anyway we just wanted to fill you in on some of the background and sketch out how your own little enterprise fits into the grand overall scheme of things – you'll appreciate that within the three main stands of our operations out there you are very much towards the sharp end of things as opposed to the more bread-and-butter side of our activities as we like to think of it which is nevertheless in some ways the backbone of the enterprise so we very much like to think that it's people like you who can give things an encouraging nudge in the right direction – obviously it's all a very slow process and an uphill grind much of the time but sometimes the tide does seem to turn – though we're never quite sure why – especially where you're going – and if you can try and sense which way the wind is blowing and swim with the tide to some extent and push from both ends then all well and good even if it does sometimes seem like planting primroses in a gale – so certainly if you spot what looks like an opening then by all means give it a nudge of course softly softly and one does always have to be aware of stepping on culturally sensitive toes – it is sometimes difficult to know whether one is grasping the nettle or clutching at straws and then we are actually limited in what we can actually directly take on board but there are various schemes available – and then as well as these three lines of attack there's the whole distance learning thing which seems to have taken flight and which now has twenty-six provincial outlets so that little acorn may well turn into a mighty oak once it starts to snowball downhill with the ideological tide – so that's really it unless you have any particular questions – do drop into the resource centre by the way I believe it's still in that hut round the back of the embassy building – I was just there once for a brief visit there was a big notice by the telephone which said THIS TELEPHONE IS NOT SECURE – which made me think it was about to fall off the wall – so have a jolly good trip you've got your ticket and visa and whatnot from travel section?
- no – not yet ...
- good god! you leave on Thursday don't you? never fear we'll get it all to you - we'll send it by motorcycle messenger to Heathrow – it's Beijing this time again?
- no – Rio de Janeiro ...