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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

9 February 1984

Prime Minister.

Yes not

Content will have arrangements
to handling the discussion of
political subject at the summit?

Dear John,

A.S.C. 2/2

London Economic Summit

Sir Geoffrey Howe would like to consult the Prime Minister now on the way in which the discussion of political subjects at the London Economic Summit should be handled. There is something to be said for looking at this before the next Personal Representatives' meeting.

It would be helpful if we alerted Foreign Ministers of our intentions in two ways. First, Sir Robert Armstrong might brief Personal Representatives at his meeting on 17-19 February on our preliminary ideas for handling political discussions. This discussion, secondly, would enable the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to send a message to his colleagues in broadly similar terms but reflecting any points made at the Personal Representatives' meeting.

The Prime Minister may find it helpful to have a text (attached) which could be used as a speaking note by Sir Robert Armstrong. As you will see, Sir Geoffrey Howe envisages that when Foreign Ministers are not accompanying their Heads of State or Government, they should use their time to exchange views on current political subjects. He will be in contact with his colleagues about which subjects could most profitably be discussed.

I am copying this letter to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever
[Signature]

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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CONCLUSIONS TO BE ADOPTED BY PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES

1. In accordance with established practice, it is envisaged that during the London Summit the Heads of State and Government may wish to consider topical political questions; and that whether they do so or not, the Foreign Ministers are likely to wish to discuss political matters at meetings and/or meals for which the programme provides.

2. In order to facilitate such discussions, the UK proposes to circulate during the first week of May a draft illustrative list of political questions which could be suitable for consideration at the London Summit, and to invite comments.

3. In the light of these comments, the UK has it in mind to organise a short meeting of officials to finalise the list of questions, (subject to the views of Personal Representatives and to subsequent events). Since the Political Directors of the Foreign Ministries of Britain, France, the FRG and Italy are expected to be in Paris on 17-18 May for a meeting of the Political Committee of the Ten, the UK envisages holding this meeting at HM Embassy in Paris on 18 May, starting at 1500 hours and concluding not later than 1900 hours.

4. The draft list of political questions as it emerges from that meeting will be conveyed to Personal Representatives during their meeting at Chevening on 18-20 May for their consideration.