

Strictly
Personal



~~John~~ MA¹²/2.

X sounds highly implausible to me : I wonder if I detect the whitting of mandarin machinations.

Can you confirm/deny that the PM. does have this in mind? If she doesn't, to your knowledge, I would propose to counsel the Chancellor against such a scheme : I think Finance Ministers work best on their own.

JPK

FROM : J G LITTLER

DATE : 15 February 1984

MR KERR

LONDON ECONOMIC SUMMIT

A question has been raised about arrangements for the meetings at the Summit on which it would be helpful for me to have the Chancellor's reactions. It may well be raised during a future talk with the Prime Minister about Summit arrangements.

2. As you will personally remember, the tradition (at least recently) has been that Ministerial meetings at Summits have taken place without any advisors or note-takers being present, with the single exception of the Personal Representatives (Sir Robert Armstrong and his opposite numbers) who have often been brought in as note-takers for the sessions of Heads of Government and for Plenary meetings. Foreign and Finance Ministers have met without officials present.

X 3. However, the Prime Minister apparently suggested recently that there could be advantage in making provision for note-takers at all sessions, recognising that this would have to be on the basis of one per Minister. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has not made up his mind finally, but has asked that seating plans be made in such a way as to leave him the option of allowing himself and each of his colleagues to have one advisor/note-taker present at the various meetings of Foreign Ministers.

4. I can see some possible advantage in the same arrangement for Finance Ministers, not necessarily for all sessions. The Chancellor might want to have a session uncluttered by any officials. On the other hand, there could well be a session, perhaps early in the proceedings, as one result of which the Chancellor and his colleagues would want to put a piece of writing to the Plenary session (eg, a communique passage or annex on a

particular subject). For this purpose, it could be very helpful for me and my opposite numbers to have been present, so that we could then go away and look at a draft collectively in full knowledge of the discussion which had led to it.

5. In conclusion:

- Unless the Chancellor decides firmly now that he would prefer not to have officials present, I suggest that we follow the example of the Foreign Secretary in asking for seating arrangements which would allow room for one official per Minister;
- A final decision might be made on a future occasion when the Prime Minister, Chancellor and Foreign Secretary are discussing together the arrangements for handling the Summit.


J G LITTLER