

SECRET

RECORD OF A MEETING AT THE HOUSE OF HM AMBASSADOR, VIENNA AT  
BREAKFAST ON 16 MAY

Present:

US

Mr Muskie  
Mr Vest  
Mr Billings

FRG

Herr Genscher  
Herr Droege  
Herr Schenk

France

M. Francois-Poncet  
M. Robin  
another official

UK

Lord Carrington  
Mr Bullard  
Mr Walden

VENICE SUMMIT : POLITICAL ASPECTS

1. At the invitation of Lord Carrington, M. Francois-Poncet explained the French attitude. They thought that the quadripartite forum was the best group for genuine political consultations. Any larger framework was difficult, as experience in Tokyo and elsewhere had shown. The Group of Seven had been set up four years ago as an economic summit, and its members had been selected accordingly. Admittedly the world situation today was of a special kind, and it would be difficult for the Seven to meet in Venice without discussing political matters. But France was reluctant to see these discussions summarised in a political communique. Some general sentences might be acceptable. But it must be made clear that the Seven remained an economic forum. Moreover the European Council would be meeting immediately beforehand, and the NATO Foreign Ministers immediately afterwards. It was not good for the Western image to have too frequent declarations. Lastly, there was the risk that if a communique were decided upon, the Heads of Government would devote too much time to discussing its wording.
2. Mr Muskie said that intellectually he could not contest this statement. But there was a problem about excluding countries from groupings where they felt they belonged. Some cover was needed, and the cover was never adequate. Instinctively he preferred small groups to large, but there might be a case for exceptions. He hoped



SECRET

- 2 -

the question should be tackled case by case: first we should  
organise Venice, and depending on how that turned out, we could  
consider the future.

SECRET