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CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO

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1 December 1981

Economic Summit Dates

You will recall that it was suggested at last week's meeting of the Royal Visits Committee that President Reagan might be a candidate for a State Visit (or an official visit, if the full procedure of a State Visit was thought unsuitable) to Britain next June. Since it could be expected that President Reagan would be going to the Economic Summit, for which the French have proposed the dates of 7th-8th June, his acceptance of an invitation to make a visit here after the Summit would mean that there would be no impediment to the Prime Minister staying in Paris until the end of the Summit with a State Visit beginning, exceptionally, on the following day, Wednesday 9th June.

It was, however, thought advantageous to discover whether President Reagan was likely to accept the dates proposed by the French for the Summit. Sir Robert Armstrong undertook to ask Mr Rashish about this.

Sir Robert telephoned to Mr Rashish on Thursday 26th November and put the question to him. Mr Rashish called back yesterday to say that the Americans had not yet decided whether the dates were acceptable. They had not ruled them out but they had to be fitted in with a number of other plans which the President had for early June. He did not know when the President's plans would become clear.

Sir Robert commented that our position was somewhat similar and hinted that if the President was trying to fit the proposed Economic Summit dates into his other plans for that time, those plans might perhaps include a visit here. Mr Rashish implied in reply that this was very much the sort of idea which the Americans might have in mind.

In the light of this conversation, Sir Robert Armstrong recommends that instructions should be sent to Sir Nicholas Henderson to sound out the White House about the possibility of a visit to Britain by President and Mrs Reagan with as much 'State' about it as they would like, immediately before or after the Economic Summit.

/Bearing

R A Burns Esq.,

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Bearing in mind this possibility, and the fact that the first week of June could now be available for an inward State Visit (even if not one by Mr Reagan), and the fact that a State Visit in the second week of June could if necessary begin on the Wednesday rather than the Tuesday, the reply to President Mitterrand's invitation to the Prime Minister to attend the Economic Summit on 7 & 8 June could perhaps be to the effect that, while the decision must remain subject to confirmation for a little time as yet, the Prime Minister hopes to be able so to arrange her commitments as to accept the President's invitation.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Sir Philip Moore and Clive Whitmore.

D. J. WRIGHT

(D J Wright)
Private Secretary

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