

Ref: A09636

MR. CARTLEDGE

Prime Minister

*The Japanese evidently misinterpreted your remark that Summits were better at improving personal contacts than at finding specific solutions. I think it is important that you should correct this with Mr. Esaki by speaking as suggested at 'X' below.*

Tokyo Economic Summit

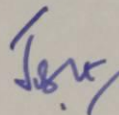
[A] At the recent Preparatory Meeting in Washington I argued, on the Prime Minister's instructions, that (i) we did not want a rerun of the Bonn Summit with macro targets and a long analytical communique and (ii) the Summit should concentrate on particular areas, notably energy, where progress could be made. In my minute A09599 of 21st May I reported that I had some success, although I warned that the Japanese themselves wanted a long and platitudinous communique.

I was therefore somewhat disconcerted to get a telephone call this afternoon from Mr. Henry Owen at the White House saying that the Economic Minister in the Japanese Embassy in Washington had told him that the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Sonoda, had been relieved to discover when he met the Prime Minister on 21st May that Mrs. Thatcher shared the Japanese wish that the Summit should concentrate on generalities and not seek to reach any conclusions. Your record of the discussion between the Prime Minister and Mr. Sonoda does not lend support to his interpretation of the Prime Minister's approach, but it may be that he read too much into a remark of the Prime Minister's.

X I understand that the Prime Minister is seeing the Japanese Minister for International Trade and Industry tomorrow. It would be very helpful in keeping the Japanese from lapsing into an over-generalised approach to the Tokyo Summit if the Prime Minister felt able to tell Mr. Esaki that she was encouraged by the report she had had from the recent meeting of personal representatives that there seemed general agreement that the Summit should concentrate on those areas where progress could be made, in particular energy.

Agree? If the Prime Minister is content I would also like to confirm to Henry Owen that this is the Prime Minister's view and to arrange for our Embassy in Tokyo to be informed so that they can put the matter in context if they get similar reports of the Prime Minister's views from the Japanese.

I am sending a copy of this minute to Sir Michael Palliser, who was with me at the Washington meeting.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Hunt'.

John Hunt

24th May, 1979