

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref. A084/23

MR COLES

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f.a.

Economic Summit 1984

Following your minute of 21 December, I have proposed 7-9 June as the dates for the Economic Summit in 1984. All the participants have accepted for those dates.

2. All are content that the announcement should be made tomorrow, Wednesday 4 January, at 2.30 pm our time. I am asking Mr Ingham to arrange accordingly.

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ROBERT ARMSTRONG

3 January 1984

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Economic Summit: 1984

Thank you for your minute of 20 December.

The Prime Minister agrees that you should attempt to reach agreement with the other Summit participants that the programme should begin on the evening of 7 June.

If it proves unavoidable, Mrs. Thatcher will be prepared to ask another Minister to take Questions on that day. But I think she will hope that we can so arrange the arrival ceremonies that these take place between say 4.00 p.m. and the early evening. It is the Prime Minister's intention to greet personally all the participants as they arrive.

A. J. COLES

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21 December 1983

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Ref.A083/3522

MR COLESEconomic Summit: 1984

Thank you for your minute of 19 December about the dates of the Summit.

2. As you know, I had to speak to Monsieur Attali on Monday 19 December, to forewarn him about the decision on SKYNET. He went on to raise the subject of the dates of the Summit. He said that he was sorry he had had to put a spanner in the works, but an announcement of 8-10 June would have created great difficulties for his President, because the President genuinely had an engagement in France on Sunday 10 June, for which he would have to return. He would be perfectly happy to attend a Summit meeting on 8-9 June, and indeed to start on the evening of 7 June, if that was possible for other people. I said that I would need to explore this possibility, and would come back to him.
3. I have since spoken to the White House. President Reagan could come from the evening of 7 June to the evening of 9 June.
4. At this point I think I have to pause, because I am by no means sure that I should be able to find one of the other participants who would not be able to accept the earlier timing. If I now start going round to the other participants, the danger is that I shall get increasingly drawn into the earlier dates.
5. I realise the difficulties of starting on the evening of 7 June for the Prime Minister, but it begins to look as if we may be able to reach agreement with the other participants on the basis of the evening of 7 June to the evening of 9 June, and I wonder whether we ought to look again at that as a real possibility. If the Prime Minister felt that she must be in the House of Commons to answer Questions, we could seek to arrange the arrival of schedules so that she was herself able to

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greet the main leaders. But perhaps the House of Commons would understand if she felt obliged to miss one Question time in order to free herself to greet Heads of State or Government coming from other countries for a Summit meeting at which she was the host.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

20 December 1983

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PRIME MINISTER

Economic Summit : 1984

In the attached minute Sir Robert Armstrong seeks your authority to start the Summit on the evening of 7 June (which both President Mitterrand and President Reagan can accept).

This involves the difficulty which I brought to your attention the other day. 7 June is a Thursday. It is possible that you may be confronted with the awkward choice between meeting your guests as they arrive and answering Questions in the House. We can of course try to fit all the ~~travellers~~^{arrivals} into the period between say 4.00 p.m. and the early evening but there is no guarantee that we shall succeed. I personally think it will be taken amiss if you do not greet all the participants as they arrive. This has been standard practice with other Summits. And it would be very invidious to meet some but not all the participants.

You will miss Questions at the end of June because of the European Council. It is unusual for the Prime Minister not to take Questions if he or she is in the United Kingdom. But we have found one precedent when Mr. Callaghan in 1977 attended the Jubilee celebrations of the fleet instead of answering Questions. If necessary, would you be prepared to ask another Minister to take Questions on 7 June?

Yes no

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20 December 1983

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ECONOMIC SUMMIT: 1984

Thank you for your minute of 16 December which the Prime Minister considered over the weekend.

Mrs. Thatcher sees considerable difficulty in the idea that the Summit should begin on the evening of Thursday, 7 June. This suggestion would mean that the Prime Minister would either have to miss Questions that day, or would be absent when some of the Summit participants arrived. Mrs. Thatcher would find neither consequence welcome.

If, for tactical reasons vis-a-vis the French, you wished to float this idea, the Prime Minister would have no objection to your doing so provided you can be reasonably sure that at least one of the other participants would not be able to accept the earlier timing. In that case the French could be told that we had tried to meet their wishes, but failed.

A. J. COLES

19 December, 1983

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10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister.

The difficulty referred to by Sir Robert Armstrong is a substantial one.

I do not imagine that you will wish either to miss Quentin or not be on hand to receive each Summit participant as he arrives.

shall I ask Sir Robert, in putting the new date to the other participants, to ensure that at least one of them finds them unacceptable?

✓ would help
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MR COLES

Economic Summit 1984

We have run into a last minute snag about announcing the dates. The French President said that he could not agree to the terms of the announcement because it referred to a Summit on 8 to 10 June, and he could not be there on 10 June.

2. I suspect that we shall have in the end to go back to the French and put pressure on them. But we should be in a stronger position to do so if we had first investigated the possibility of a small shift in the dates which would deal with President Mitterrand's apparent difficulty. This would be to bring the process forward by 24 hours. On this basis the first event would be dinner on Thursday 7 June 1984, and proceedings would close on the evening of Saturday 9 June with the press conference and The Queen's Banquet at Buckingham Palace.

3. So far as I can see the only practical difficulty at our end is the possibility that some of the early arrivals might come in before 4.00 pm. If the Prime Minister wanted to answer her Questions in the House of Commons that afternoon, she would have to ask the Lord President or the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to meet those who arrived before that time. But I do not think that that would be an insuperable difficulty. The custom is for arrivals to take place in reverse protocol order of importance and that means that the last arrivals would be the President of the French Republic and the President of the United States, who could be timed to arrive after 4.00 pm.

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4. I should therefore be grateful if the Prime Minister would allow me to sound out, through Personal Representatives, the possibility of bringing the dates for the Summit forward by 24 hours.

5. If that proves to be impossible for others, then we shall be in a stronger position to bring pressure to bear upon the French President.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

16 December 1983