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From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref. A084/721

6 March 1984

My dear Julian,

A. J. C. $\frac{7}{3}$.

f.a.

London Economic Summit 1984: Political Discussion

At the meeting of Personal Representatives last month I raised the matter of political discussion at the London Economic Summit and our preparation for it on the lines that we had agreed. The discussion took place on an occasion when France was represented by Jean-Claude Paye, but I subsequently had an opportunity of a word with Jacques Attali, and what follows reflects what he had to say.

There was general agreement that there should be a meeting of Political Directors (or equivalent representatives) shortly before the last meeting of Personal Representatives, to discuss and report to Personal Representatives upon a list of subjects to be discussed by Heads of State or Government at their informal gatherings over meals, and a list of subjects to be considered by Foreign Ministers when they met separately. This was on the understanding that we were really suggesting no more than had happened at previous Summits.

Attali subsequently said that President Mitterrand would be happy, provided that political preparation stopped at that. He would not, however, be prepared to contemplate any kind of political declaration from the Economic Summit, unless political circumstances at the time were generally agreed to make such a declaration imperative. President Mitterrand also attached great importance to confining political discussion to meals. It had been extremely unwelcome to him when the first formal meeting of Heads of State or Government at Williamsburg had gone into discussion of political subjects; in London, he would wish to be sure that the first meeting of Heads of State or Government on the morning of Friday 8 June took the economic agenda and did not address itself to political subjects.

/ I said

Sir Julian Bullard KCMG

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I said that it was certainly the Prime Minister's intention that the discussion of political subjects should be reserved for meal times, and that the formal sessions should be devoted to the economic issues. Nonetheless, neither Jacques Attali nor I could in the end tell Heads of State or Government what they should do; if they decided together on the evening of Thursday 7 June that they wanted to discuss political subjects on the Friday morning, they would do so and there would be nothing that we could or should do about it. Jacques Attali entirely accepted that that was so, though he said that it would remain the President's view that the Friday morning meeting of Heads of State or Government should go straight into the economic issues.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Coles and Nicholas Barrington.

Yours ever

Robert Armstrong

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