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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

26 February 1986

Dear Len,

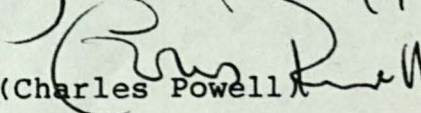
BRITISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EC: ORGANISATION OF THE LONDON
EUROPEAN COUNCIL

I have now had a chance to discuss with the Prime Minister Colin Budd's letter and enclosure of 17 February and your letter of 25 February.

Generally the Prime Minister is content with the outline programme enclosed with Colin's letter of 17 February. She agrees that it would be wise to leave open the possibility of having to hold a first session on the morning of 5 December, though we should not offer this until it is clearly necessary. She is content for the dinner for Heads of Government to be at 10 Downing Street and for it to be preceded by an informal discussion among Heads of Government over drinks beginning at 1930.

Your letter of 25 February proposes that the family photograph might take place just before the dinner at 10 Downing Street. I am not sure how this would fit in with plans for Foreign Ministers to have a separate meeting and dinner. I do not think that we could cope with two dinners here.

I am confident that the Prime Minister would be content with the various proposals for improving the conduct of the European Council set out in Colin's letter of 17 February, notably that topics should not be raised at the last moment, that conclusions should relate solely to matters actually discussed by Heads of Government, that we should avoid a cumbersome set-piece discussion on the economic and social situation, that no political co-operation text should be submitted to Heads of Government before being fully considered by Foreign Ministers and that the European Council should make statements on political co-operation matters only if it has something new and important to say.

Yours sincerely,

(Charles Powell)

Len Appleyard, Esq., C.M.G.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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EUROPEAN COUNCIL: DECEMBER 1986

Although its a long way ahead, we need to reach some decisions on the programme for the European Council during the United Kingdom Presidency. The Council itself will be held at the new Conference Centre.

I attach an outline programme and add the following questions:

(i) although it should be possible to compress all the business into two main sessions on the afternoon of 5 December and the morning of 6 December - particularly if we avoid a cumbersome set-piece discussion on the economic and social situation - we need to keep in reserve the possibility of starting on the morning of 5 December if there turns out to be more business than expected.

Agree?

Yes

No

(ii) it is proposed that your dinner for Heads of Government should be here at 10 Downing Street, both because they would like it and its best for informal discussion.

Agree?

Yes

No

(iii) it is proposed to invite Heads of Government to an informal discussion over drinks from 7.30 - 8.30 followed by dinner. The alternative is to have the informal discussion over or after dinner. But this seldom works well in practice.

Agree to discussion over drinks?

Yes

No

We propose to introduce other improvements viz: no last-minute circulation of papers, conclusions to relate solely to matters actually discussed by Heads of Government, all POCO texts to be considered formally by Foreign Ministers and anyway limited to issues on which the European Council has something useful to say.

Agree

Yes

No

C.D.P.
C D P

25 February 1986

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OUTLINE PROGRAMME FOR LONDON EUROPEAN COUNCIL

5 December

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| a.m. | Arrival of delegations |
| 1.00 -3.00 p.m. | Luncheon given by HM The Queen |
| 3.00-3.30 p.m. | Arrival of delegations at
Queen Elizabeth II Conference
Centre |
| 3.30-6.00 p.m. | First session of European Council |
| 7.30-8.30 p.m. | Heads of State/Government informal
discussion over drinks at
10 Downing Street |
| 7.30-8.30 p.m. | Foreign Ministers Political
Co-Operation meeting over drinks
(venue to be decided) |
| 8.30-10.00 p.m. | Heads of State/Government Dinner
at 10 Downing Street |
| 8.30-10.00 p.m. | Foreign Ministers' Dinner (venue
to be decided) |

(The Heads of State and Government informal discussion could be after dinner if the Prime Minister preferred)

6 December

9.30 a.m.

Family photograph

9.45-12.30 p.m.

Second session of European
Council, ending with short
Presidency conclusions

1.00-2.15 p.m.

Lunch at Conference Centre

2.30 p.m.

Presidency Press Conference
Followed by National Press
Conferences and Departures