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Prime Minister ①

Ref. A085/2603

MR POWELL

This is really a key letter - do we have to write to Mr. Nakasone about this?

Agree to write to Mr. Nakasone about

CDP 10/11

Lord Trend came in to see me the other day about the proposal of the Trustees of the British Museum to create a new Japanese Gallery to show their Japanese collection, only one fifth of which can now be displayed.

2. The Museum need to raise £5 million for this purpose; and they are seeking to raise it from Japanese as well as from British industry.

3. Lord Trend wondered whether the Prime Minister would be willing to write a letter to Mr Nakasone, the Japanese Prime Minister, to tell him of the British Museum's plans for a Japanese Gallery, to emphasise the value that such a Gallery would have in extending knowledge of Japanese civilisation and culture in this country and in generally promoting Anglo-Japanese relations, and asking him to let it be known among Japanese industrialists that he knew of the appeal and it had his blessing and support.

4. If the Prime Minister were willing to write to Mr Nakasone in this way, I would arrange with Lord Trend for the preparation of a draft letter; and I could take the draft letter and give it to the Japanese Prime Minister's Personal Representative at the Sherpa meeting next month.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

10 October 1985



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Prime Minister has considered your minute of 10 October about the proposed letter to Mr. Nakasone telling him of the British Museum's plans for a Japanese Gallery.

The Prime Minister is not keen to write as you propose since, however it is wrapped up, it would appear to be a begging letter. She thinks there must be other ways to enlist the support of Japanese industry.

C.D.P.

Charles Powell

14 October 1985

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PRIME MINISTER

JAPANESE GALLERY AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

You earlier declined to write to Mr. Nakasone urging him to support an appeal in Japan for funds for a Japanese Gallery at the British Museum. You thought it was wrong to write in effect a begging letter to another Head of Government.

The Museum have returned to the charge, pointing out that they are not asking the Japanese Government for money, only that Mr. Nakasone encourage Japanese industry and commerce to give to the appeal.

This doesn't seem to me to change things. It will still lose you face with Mr. Nakasone that we have to be begging him to help rustle up £5 million.

Confirm your original decision not to write?

Yes
mb

CDP

CDP

12 November, 1985.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

JAPANESE GALLERY AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

You consulted me earlier about whether the Prime Minister was likely to change her mind about her decision not to write to Mr. Nakasone in support of the British Museum's appeal for their Japanese Gallery. I have a very firm indication that her views remain unchanged.

(Charles Powell)

13 November 1985

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