



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

15 May 1981

Sir Robert Armstrong KCB CVO
CABINET OFFICE

W. Whitmore ^{14/5}
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Ph...

Dear Robert,

OTTAWA SEVEN POWER SUMMIT: POLITICAL PREPARATIONS

1. We are up against a rather tricky problem in preparing for the political aspects of the Ottawa Economic Summit in July. I think I ought to set out the issues as I see them, and indicate how best we might proceed.
2. At the quadripartite Ministerial dinner in Rome on 3 May, the French Foreign Minister accepted that there should be political discussion at the Ottawa Summit. He said, apparently for the record, that he hoped that this would not necessarily become the rule at these Seven Power Summits. The French thus having fallen into line, the four Ministers were therefore able to agree that the political discussion should be prepared in the same way as we prepared for the Venice Summit. You will recall that in the spring of last year Robert Wade-Gery and I had a meeting with Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher, State Secretary van Well and the French Political Director. The arrangements worked admirably. We were able to mastermind the preparations for the political discussion in Venice without the Italian hosts knowing that we were doing so and in such a way that the real issues were tackled in the most effective manner.
3. Ideally, we should have hoped to do the same this year, but the result of the French presidential election has considerably complicated matters. The normal preparations for the Ottawa Summit will clearly continue: the Personal Representatives agreed at their meeting in London that the Political Directors of the Seven should meet in Ottawa (or Montebello) in the early days of July. In principle, therefore, we would have wanted to aim for a quadripartite meeting in June. It so happens that one of the normal series of quadripartite meetings of Political Directors is due to take place in the week beginning 15 June when Eagleburger is coming over to Europe on other business and the sensible course would be to use that meeting as an occasion to prepare for Ottawa as well. It is the French turn to play host, though we could offer to do so.

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4. Unfortunately, it is by no means clear that the new French administration will be in a position by then to decide to cooperate with these quadripartite arrangements, let alone join the other three in the even more delicate business of pre-cooking in some measure the preparations for Ottawa. And even if the French were to decide in principle to cooperate, it might well be too soon for them to make much of a contribution on the substance. Equally seriously, it is very far from certain that the Americans would be prepared to contemplate participating in any quadripartite meeting, whether in the normal series or in preparation for Ottawa, without knowing whether the eventual French Government to be formed after the legislative elections will contain Communists. As you will have seen from Washington telegram number 1454, Eagleburger has already said that if there are Communists in the French Government, the Americans will not continue to play the quadripartite game.

5. Clearly, however, we cannot leave matters in limbo. The quadripartite forum is of crucial importance to us and so too will be an effective preparation for Ottawa. You will recall that in Rome Eagleburger suggested that the discussion there should 'be in an East-West framework'. The matters covered might include a possible Reagan/Brezhnev summit, arms control, Poland and Afghanistan. The communique should make a brief 'uncomplicated' reference to the Soviet threat. We agree with the Americans that the discussion should focus on East-West relations. The Polish Party Congress, if it happens on schedule, will have finished on 18 July, the day before the Summit. If others were willing to go further and consider the problem of Soviet expansionism in the Third World generally, or with reference to specific examples, we could gladly go along with this.

6. In the circumstances I have asked Julian Bullard to explore with the Americans whether in principle they would agree to a meeting in the middle of June, possibly in London. Eagleburger himself will be here on 15 and 16 June to deliver the key-note address at a Chatham House conference on Challenges to the West, before going on to a NATO meeting in Brussels. In the light of his views we could approach the Germans similarly. We may need to leave open for the time being the question of whether the French should be involved. If we can sort something out, even tripartitely, I would be ready to participate myself if the level of American and German participation made that appropriate; otherwise I should myself be wholly content for Julian Bullard to represent

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us. Naturally, for the discussion about Ottawa, a representative from the Cabinet Office would be welcome. Our primary concern however must be to preserve the authority and integrity of the quadripartite forum and we shall need to deal carefully therefore with the American as well as French susceptibilities. In this regard we may know more about American attitudes after the Quadripartite Ambassadorial lunch in Washington on 19 May.

T. J. [unclear]

Michael Palliser

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cc: M O'D B Alexander Esq
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