



Ref. A087/1396

MR. POWELL

Now overtake. Fanfani  
has conceded.

AD  
1915.

Summit Preparations

Ambassador Ruggiero asked me at the weekend whether, in reply to Signor Fanfani's plea, the Prime Minister would relent and agree to see him before the Summit.

2. I said that I feared she would not; and I showed him a copy of the Prime Minister's letter to Signor Fanfani of 15 May.
3. Ambassador Ruggiero was very sad about it. He said that, apart from the value of their having a conversation before the Summit, all the greater because of the key role which the Prime Minister would be expected to play, it was a matter of personal prestige for Signor Fanfani: it had become personally (and I dare say politically: they have an election too, though as Signor Fanfani is a Senator for life he does not have to stand for election himself) important to him to be able to say that he had seen Mrs Thatcher as well as the other Heads of State or Government. It was clear that a visit by me to Rome to talk to Ambassador Ruggiero would in no way be regarded by Signor Fanfani as an adequate substitute. Ambassador Ruggiero was sure that Signor Fanfani would come at any time of day, and would not expect to be entertained to a meal, or to take up very much of the Prime Minister's time.
4. I said that the Prime Minister's schedule during the campaign was horrendous, and I was sure that she had considered very carefully before saying that it was impossible. But I promised to report my conversation with Ambassador Ruggiero, and to see once again whether there was any possibility of fitting in an hour, or even half an hour (Ruggiero's thought, but not I think a very realistic one) some time before Signor Fanfani goes to North America in a week's time.

RA

18 May 1987

ROBERT ARMSTRONG