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From the Private Secretary

23 March 1988

Anglo-Italian Summit, 20 April
Ministerial Participation

Thank you for your letter of 23 March about the Anglo-Italian Summit. I agree that we should keep the options open until Easter. I am sure the Prime Minister would be content with the participation which you propose.

I am copying this letter to Brian Hawtin (Ministry of Defence), Philip Mawer (Home Office), Shirley Stagg (MAFF) and Miranda Harvey (PS/Mr. Maude, DTI).

(CHARLES POWELL)

Lyn Parker, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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London SW1A 2AH

23 March 1988

Dear Charles,

Anglo-Italian Summit: 20 April: Ministerial Participation

As discussed on the telephone, we are keeping a close eye on whether it makes sense to hold the Anglo-Italian Summit. There would clearly be little merit in doing so with an Italian Government which was not viable; but it is too early to predict whether this will turn out to be the case. De Mita has only just started his consultations. If he manages to form a coalition in the next week or so, a Summit on 20 April would be a good opportunity to influence the new Government. If however we called off the Summit at this stage, De Mita would be very likely to see it as a snub. For the time being therefore we see little alternative to continuing to plan on a contingency basis for a summit on 20 April. Sir Derek Thomas has recommended from Rome that we should wait till Easter before deciding whether to postpone the Summit. If by that stage there seems little chance of a Government being formed rapidly, we would recommend postponing the Summit.

For the moment, however, we need to establish on a contingency basis which Ministers might be involved. The Italians have not yet made formal proposals on this and seem unlikely to do so straight away. We should like to clear our own minds in good time.

The main topics for discussion at the Summit seem likely to be EC issues (especially the single market), defence and arms control, counter-terrorist co-operation and regional issues such as the Gulf. This suggests a similar pattern of Ministerial attendance to that of recent years:

Foreign Ministers
Ministers of Defence
Ministers of Home Affairs
Ministers responsible for Trade.

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We have considered whether Ministers of Agriculture should be added; but there is no particular reason to favour a discussion of the CAP. Ministers of Finance did not take part in the last two Summits, and there is no special requirement for them to attend this one. Our own Department of Trade and Industry has no single counterpart in Rome, and I understand that Lord Young has other engagements on that day; but given the current relevance of the single market we suggest that Mr Maude might take part on this occasion.

I am copying this letter to Brian Hawtin (MOD), Philip Mawer (Home Office), Shirley Stagg (MAFF), and Miranda Harvey (PS/Mr Maude, DTI).

Yours ever, *L Parker*

(L Parker)
Private Secretary

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