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MEETING RECORD:

Subject cc master.

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

19 May 1988

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

THE THYSSEN COLLECTION

The Prime Minister spoke to Sir Peter Smithers on the telephone this evening in the presence of the Secretary of State for the Environment and yourself. She explained that Cabinet had discussed the possibility of the UK proposals this morning, and decided that it would be right to proceed. The question now was how best to approach the Baron, and she would be grateful for Sir Peter Smithers' advice. The impression she had so far was that the approach should be fairly low key, but she did not want to run the risk of underplaying the offer.

Sir Peter said that he thought that a covering letter from the Prime Minister would give the offer the necessary air of dignity, and that it would be important to show a firmness of decision. He thought that the Baron would be very interested to receive the offer and would immediately want to discuss the contents. One man with whom he felt the Baron would be able to do this was Claud Hankers-Drielsma. The Prime Minister accepted his advice, and suggested that Mr. Hankers-Drielsma should be accompanied by Robin Butler who would be best able to represent the Government. It was agreed that this would be the ideal combination. It was also agreed that the offer should be made as quickly as possible as the Baron would appreciate the secrecy with which it had been put together, and the longer it was left the greater the risk of publicity.

P. A. BEARPARK
19 May 1988

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