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Per type attach 6/6

Ref. A088/1688

Prime Minister

MR WICKS

A letter to the Baron is

attached

The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection

ASB  
3/6

Thank you for your minute of 2 June attaching Baron Thyssen's letter of 30 May to the Prime Minister. I am attaching to this minute copies of the similar letters received by the Secretary of State for the Environment, the Minister for the Arts and myself.

2. Following receipt of these letters I have had discussions with Sir Peter Smithers on the telephone and with Mr Robert Alexander and Mr Hanks-Drielsma.

3. Sir Peter Smithers attaches significance to the fact that the Baron's letter does not say that he and his family prefer the Spanish solution. The letter to the Prime Minister says that they feel that "for the time being we cannot unilaterally break the agreement we signed with the Spanish Government". Sir Peter Smithers believes that the Trustees will nevertheless consider the British proposal at the meeting in early July, and Mr Hanks-Drielsma has confirmed in a telephone conversation with Mr Coleridge, the Chairman of the Trustees, that this is his intention. Sir Peter Smithers believes that the Baron's letter has been greatly influenced by his son, who is mentioned in the letter, since it reflects what is believed to be the son's views, namely that the Spanish proposal is unsatisfactory but that the family's honour is bound up in not breaking it unilaterally.

Sir Peter should to say he now thought it was the Spanish this is by Coleridge also was the problem

4. In the light of this, my advice, with which Mr Alexander, Sir Peter Smithers and Mr Hanks-Drielsma agree, is that our objective should now be that the offer is considered by the



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Trustees in July, and that we should maintain the deadline of the end of July for a decision on whether to pursue it. Much will depend on the progress of the discussions with Spain and Mr Coleridge's information on the talks which the Baron attended 10 days ago is that they did not proceed satisfactorily.

5. In the light of this, I recommend that the Prime Minister replies to the Baron's letter in the attached terms.

6. Baron Thyssen has been invited by the Trustees of the National Gallery to attend a dinner on 23 June in London to celebrate Mr Walter Annenberg's 80th Birthday. It could be advantageous to arrange a lunch with him when he is over to see if there are any further points which could be profitably pursued with him before the meeting of the Trust. It is important that such an occasion does not give him the impression that the British Government is seeking to put pressure on him. Mr Alexander is seeking advice from Sir Jacob Rothschild on how might be the best way of using this opportunity, if it arises.

7. I am copying this minute to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for the Environment, the Attorney General and the Minister for the Arts.

R.B.

ROBIN BUTLER

3 June 1988

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DRAFT OF 3 JUNE 1988

DRAFT LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO BARON  
THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA

Thank you for your letter of 30 May. I am very grateful to you for informing me of the progress of your discussions about the future of the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.

I am glad that you found our proposal helpful. My colleagues and I readily understand your position in relation to the memorandum of understanding which you have signed with the Spanish Government. The proposal which the British Government has made to you and the Trustees for the future of the Collection remains available and we look forward to hearing the outcome of the Trustees' discussion in July about whether you and the Trustees wish to pursue our proposal. We will leave the matter in the hands of yourself and the Trustees, but if there is any further information or help which we can give in the meantime, please do not hesitate to let me know.

CSW

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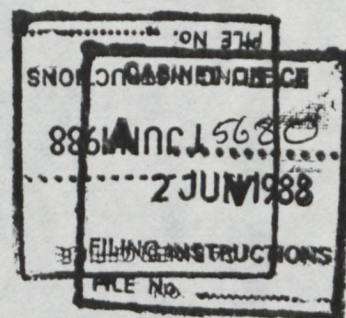
H. H. THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA

6976 CASTAGNOLA (SCHWEIZ)

VILLA FAVORITA - TEL 51 66 21

May 30th, 1988.

Sir Robin Butler KCB, CVO  
Secretary of the Cabinet and  
Head of the Home Civil Service  
Secretariat  
70 Whitehall  
GB - London SW1A 2 AS



*Dear Sir,*

thank you so much for your short visit on 21st of May last, when you delivered me the proposal of Her British Majesty's Government.

It was carefully studied by my eldest son George Henry and my wife. We came though to the conclusion that the letter of intent signed between the Spanish Government and myself on the 7th of April this year commits me for the next 12 year (including refurbishment of the Villa Hermosa) to lend about 700 pictures to Spain.

I am sorry not to be able to give you better news for your long-term solution, for the time being. I will keep the proposal strictly confidential. I have written to His Royal Highness Prince Charles, to the Prime Minister and to the Minister for the Arts and the Secretary of State for the Environment accordingly.

Thanking you for the enormous efforts made to put the proposal together in such a short time, I am sending you my best regards,

*Henry Thyssen-Bornemisza*

H.H. Thyssen-Bornemisza

c. Mr Stoane (OAL)  
Mr Jefferson (DOE)  
Mr Anson (Treasury)  
Mrs Care (Treasury)  
Mr Collins (T Sol)



H. H. THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA

6976 CASTAGNOLA (SCHWEIZ)  
VILLA FAVORITA - TEL 51 66 21

May 30th, 1988.

The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP ✓  
Minister for the Arts

The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment

70 Whitehall  
GB - London SW1A 2 AS

*Dear Sirs,*

First of all I wish to thank you for the speedy and very clear proposal of Her Majesty's Government of the 19th of May of this year. I discussed it with my eldest son George Henry and my wife, who studied the contract very carefully. We came though to the conclusion that we cannot unilaterally break the letter of intent signed with the Spanish Government on April 7th this year. In this contract the Villa Hermosa in Madrid will be modified into a modern Museum within two years and lent 600 to 700 pictures from our collection for ten years, which takes us to the year 2000.

I am sorry that I cannot give you a more positive answer on the long-term solution, but I do hope that we can exchange exhibitions between English institutions with Lugano and/or Madrid.

*with our best regards, Yours sincerely*

*Hans Thyssen-Bornemisza*

H.H. Thyssen-Bornemisza

OFFICE OF ARTS AND HERITAGES
ACTION: <i>Mr Stone</i>
BY:
FOR INFORMATION:
<i>Mr Wilding (OR)</i>
<i>Miss Morrison (OR)</i>
<i>Mrs Stokes</i>

SECRETARY OF STATE PRIVATE COUNCIL OF STATE
<i>C.4507</i>
-2 JUN 1988
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Artt v Amerindes : Thysen feb 88



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*me from*

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

I should be grateful if you could provide advice on, and a draft for the Prime Minister to send to, the letter attached from Baron H.H. Thyssen-Bornemisza regarding his collection of pictures. I know that the Prime Minister would like to send a reply quickly.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Tony Galsworthy (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Alex Allan (H M Treasury), Roger Bright (Department of the Environment) and to Eleanor Goodison (Office of the Minister for the Arts).

N. L. WICKS

2 June 1988

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