



GCPC (2)

Five Minute  
CDP  
13/2.

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Ref. A087/381

MR POWELL

Thank you for your minute of 11 February, replying to mine of 10 February about the recent meeting of Personal Representatives in preparation for the Economic Summit.

2. I fear that my account may have done less than justice to the value of the meeting. The discussion of the issues was detailed and substantial. But the Japanese representatives would have been left in no doubt about the views of other Governments (including the British Government) of what was expected of them. I do not think that a much more specific outcome was to be expected from a meeting at this stage, the main purpose of which was to enable the Italians to form some ideas of what themes other Governments would expect to see developed in the thematic paper which they had undertaken to prepare. We were given some useful insights into the views and attitudes of the United States administration. The first draft of the thematic paper will be discussed at the next meeting in April. I shall of course submit that to Ministers and seek their instructions before that meeting on the line which they wish the British representatives to take.

[Second thoughts!]  
[Not what the first minute said!]

3. The Italians could probably have produced a draft thematic paper of sorts without this meeting, and I have argued (unsuccessfully) for fewer meetings of Personal Representatives before each of the last three Summits. But the Italians themselves (and others) believed that the meeting would be useful, in that they would have a clearer idea of the views of other Governments as to what was likely to be the main content of the Summit and that a meeting now could thus facilitate better progress in preparation and discussion of a thematic paper later on. The North American and Japanese Personal



Representatives were in Europe for other meetings, and this meeting could therefore be laid on with relatively little inconvenience and expense.

4. Given the Italian decision to hold the meeting, I do not think that it would have been right for the United Kingdom not to be represented. But the Prime Minister's comment will strengthen my hand (or that of my successor) in arguing for fewer meetings of Personal Representatives before the 1988 Summit.

5. I am sending copies of this minute to the Private Secretary to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

13 February 1987