

cc/c ?

FROM: N L WICKS
DATE: 30 NOVEMBER 1989
Ext : 4369

PRIME MINISTER

UK ECONOMIC SUMMIT 1991

We need to start planning for the 1991 Summit!

2. You agreed last April that the site of the Economic Summit in 1991 should be in London and that preliminary bookings should be made for the two possible periods of 1-14 May and 5-18 July. I think that we should come to a firm decision on the dates and the main venues in view of the pressure to make firm bookings and set the administrative arrangements in train.

3. The traditional sequence of events (followed closely in 1989 and likely to be repeated in 1990) is for the Summit to be preceded by the IMF/IBRD Spring Meetings (normally in April) and the annual OECD Ministerial (normally in early June). The date for the OECD Ministerial is moveable, but holding the Summit in May would obviously severely squeeze this preparatory schedule. Another advantage of the July date would be that in May the EC Presidency, which attends the Summit, will be represented by Luxembourg; in July it will be the Netherlands, a more suitable Summit participant. I therefore recommend that you choose a July date.

4. I assume that you wish to host a Summit broadly consistent with the pattern set by recent Summits. This would involve some two days of meetings, including informal discussion over meals as in 1984, with working lunches and dinners in appropriate venues - we will submit suggestions later. Inevitably there will be a massive influx of journalists. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office intends to allocate staff to special units to cover the administrative and press arrangements for the Summit from mid-1990 as the workload builds up; they will make proposals for the detailed programme in due course.

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5. We have searched hard at possible venues for the Summit. But the options are severely limited by the need to provide the highest standard of conference facilities and by the need to cater for some 5,000 press, who need to be as close as possible to the site of the Summit meetings. You expressed a preference (in Charles Powell's letter of 28 April to Stephen Wall) to hold the Summit in the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre. Further studies show, however, that the Conference Centre combined if necessary with the Central Hall and Church House, is really the only place that offers the kind of facilities in this part of London that could handle the numbers of journalists we can expect. Other permutations inevitably run up against the problems of cost (eg fitting out the Horticultural Halls) or distance (the Connaught Rooms in Convent Garden were used in 1984 but proved far from ideal).

6. In these circumstances I think that the best practical alternatives for the Summit itself are No 10 or Lancaster House (as in 1977 and 1984 respectively). No 10 certainly would be possible, but a bit cramped and as in 1977, would require some construction (eg for interpreters' booths). Lancaster House on the other hand has most of the necessary space and facilities already in place, although it will be necessary to erect some temporary offices in the gardens (as for CHOGM in 1977) to replace the rooms in the Stableyard Block used in 1984 which are no longer available.

7. So I recommend that the Summit should be held at Lancaster House and the press centre at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre.

8. I should be grateful to know if you agree with these recommendations so that we may confirm the provisional bookings. I suggest we retain bookings for the moment for the whole of the 5-18 July period. There is no need at this stage to take a final decision on precise dates.

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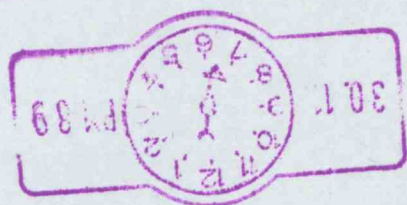
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9. I am sending a copy of this minute to the Foreign & Commonwealth Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and to Sir Robin Butler.

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N.C.W.

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