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C/Foreign Sherpa
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10 DOWNING STREET
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From the Private Secretary

14 May 1990

HOUSTON ECONOMIC SUMMIT

I have discussed with the Prime Minister your minute of 11 May about the line that you propose to take at next weekend's Sherpa meeting in Paris to prepare the Houston Economic Summit. The Prime Minister is, generally speaking, content with what you propose to say. The only aspect on which she is still uneasy is the choice of topic for informal discussion. While grateful for the work which has been done on fleshing out the "Science and Government" topic, she now feels that it is rather detailed for an Economic Summit discussion. She is inclined to think that we had better accept the American proposal of "Planning for the Year 2000" since they are the hosts, although she has worries about that too, namely that it will lead to a series of proposals for higher spending. If we are to go along with it, we had better arrange some sort of discussion here about how to handle the topic in Houston. I suggest we wait until we have your report on the Sherpa meeting before arranging this.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and to Sir Robin Butler.

(C. D. POWELL)

Nigel Wicks, Esq., C.V.O., C.B.E.
HM Treasury.

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PRIME MINISTER

HOUSTON ECONOMIC SUMMIT

I attach Nigel Wicks' minute about the line which he proposes to take at next weekend's Sherpa meeting.

It is generally uncontroversial. The only point which requires a decision is the choice of the Informal Discussion topic, dealt with in paragraphs 18 and 19 of his minute. The US have in mind the broad subject of "Planning for the Year 2000". Nigel has worked up your suggestion of "Science and Government" into a menu of ideas, which he suggests could be combined with the US proposal. To be honest, it looks a bit detailed for an Economic Summit: and I would have thought it better to accept the American proposal (since they are the hosts). We might follow their example and hold a small seminar here to come up with ideas which could be discussed under that heading.

Agree?

Yes - but the danger is (as we will know)
C.D.P?

(C. D. POWELL)

11 May 1990

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that it will be a series of proposals for hyper spending. That is why we haven't embarked on such a committee before. not