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HM Treasury



Parliament Street  
London SW1P 3AG  
Telephone 071-270 4369

N L Wicks CVO CBE  
Second Permanent Secretary

*Jim Austin*

C D Powell Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1

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*Jim Charles*

**HOUSTON SUMMIT: POSSIBLE ATTENDANCE OF PRESIDENT GORBACHEV**

The US Sherpa, McCormack, mentioned to me at the weekend's Sherpa meeting that senior figures in the Administration were considering recommending to President Bush that he should invite President Gorbachev to the last day (Wednesday 11 July) of the Summit. Only Secretary Baker and one other in the State Department were in the know. McCormack did not know whether Secretary Baker had yet discussed the matter with the President, but assumed that he had.

In answer to my question about the reasoning behind any such invitation, the Sherpa said, quite frankly, that the original idea, which he said had been his own, was that it would give a focus to what he had thought at one stage would have been a boring Summit. But events had moved on since then. It was now clear that the Summit could have real business to do - on agriculture and the environment. On the other hand, President Gorbachev needed all the support that he could get and a discussion round the Summit table might provide a real expression of solidarity with his problems.

McCormack asked for my views. I said that this was such an intensely political issue that if President Bush was really minded to extend an invitation, the other Heads should be consulted personally. For myself, I would be somewhat uneasy unless the Heads were confident that an outcome of the discussions would emerge which was satisfactory to both President Gorbachev and themselves; and it was not clear what that outcome might be.

The US Sherpa said that if his President was to proceed with the idea, he assumed that he would mention it privately at the NATO Council meeting.

The Sherpa emphasised that he was speaking to me in the strictest confidence, (so much so that he insisted leaving the conference room for the conference centre car park to impart the information!). I do not believe that he has spoken to other Sherpas in similar terms. You should also know that McCormack is not a great power house in the US Administration and what he told me may represent simply his own thoughts and may not carry Secretary Baker's endorsement.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Stephen Wall (FCO), John Gieve (Treasury) and Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

*Wicks*

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