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LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

11 July 1990

See Steer,

ECONOMIC SUMMIT, LONDON: 1991

The Prime Minister has begun to focus on the Economic Summit in London next year and would like to see early proposals on some aspects of the organisation.

The first of these is the length of the Summit. She thought the meeting in Houston was too long and would like to see us aim at something closer to the length of the NATO Summit in London, possibly starting with a dinner the evening before the first full day. At the most, she would not want it to extend over more than two complete working days. You will wish to consider this.

Her second concern is with the sort of entertainment which we offer. The Americans went to town in Houston with a rodeo and some very high-class entertainment after dinner on the second night. The Prime Minister thinks we should play to our strengths, which would suggest a special Beating the Retreat ceremony on Horse Guards, perhaps adding massed choirs and a display by the Royal Horse Artillery, as was the case with the Queen Mother's 90th birthday celebrations. The disadvantage of this is that it would put us at the mercy of the weather. If we are to go for this, we shall need to settle dates for the Summit very soon and presumably seek The Queen's permission to hold the ceremony, as well as make the necessary arrangements with the Ministry of Defence. I should be grateful if you would consult the Foreign Secretary and see whether he has any different ideas which he would like to put to the Prime Minister.

The other aspects of entertainment is formal lunches and dinners. Ideally we should keep the amount of movement around London to a minimum, which points to holding the lunches where we meet or very close by. The Prime Minister was much attracted by both Spencer House and Bridgewater House, and we might try one or other of them again, unless you have some better suggestions.

Third, there are a number of policy aspects which the Prime Minister thinks we should begin to address early in the autumn. These include an assessment of what we expect to be the main themes of the Summit and what would suit us best to emphasise. Nearer the time we shall also have to address the question of whether we want to see President Gorbachev associated with the Summit in some way or another.

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Finally, in the light of the above, we shall need to decide quite soon on precise dates in July next year for the Summit itself. It would be helpful to have a recommendation on this.

I am copying this letter to John Gieve and Nigel Wicks (H.M. Treasury)

Yours sincerely
Charles Powell

CHARLES POWELL

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