



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

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THE PRIME MINISTER

6 November 1989

Dear Dr. Tolba,

Thank you for your letter of 14 September proposing a meeting of environment ministers from the Group of Seven to follow up the Paris Economic Summit Declaration.

As Mr. Patten said to you when you met in London recently we think this is an interesting idea. We welcome any discussion of international environmental problems although there can be disadvantages in a meeting attended by only a small number of countries. To tackle the many serious environmental problems which face us today all the countries of the world need to act together. Although the Summit countries can give a lead, in the end we must look to other bodies, with a wider representation, to take things forward. That is why we value organisations such as UNEP.

As you may know Britain hosted a meeting of Summit environment ministers in 1984. Although this was a success it created bad feeling amongst those who were not invited to participate and was boycotted by the French.

A decision to call a meeting of environment ministers under the umbrella of the Economic Summit would be for France this

year or the United States next year. Whatever happens, I am confident that the environment will continue to play a major role in future Summits.

Yours sincerely

Nagant Shah

—

Dr. Mostafa K. Tolba



2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-276 3000

My ref:

Your ref:

Charles Powell
Private Secretary to
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

2 November 1989

Dear Charles

MEETING OF G7 ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS

Thank you for your letter of 10 October covering one from Dr Tolba, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, which proposes a meeting of Summit Environment Ministers to follow-up the Paris Economic Summit Declaration.

My Secretary of State discussed this briefly with Dr Tolba when they met in London recently and indicated his concern about the proposal. There are a number of disadvantages in Dr Tolba's suggestion. He proposes institutionalising the summit by creating a G7 forum for discussion of environmental matters at Ministerial level. This runs contrary to the practice of Summits' giving stimulus and policy direction to work in the relevant, existing international organisations. The summit process does not have follow-up machinery of its own to take forward matters discussed in that forum. In any case Dr Tolba's proposal misses the point that to be effective environmental action needs to be taken globally, not just by the Summit countries. The G7 countries can - and did in Paris - give a lead, but it is up to other bodies such as UNEP itself to take things forward. Mr Patten also mentioned to Dr Tolba that our own Lancaster House meeting in 1984 of G7 Environment Ministers had been a success but was boycotted by the French.

With the exception of the Germans, who are thought to be keen, other G7 countries are unlikely to be supporting Dr Tolba's proposal. The United States and Canada are opposed and France is lukewarm. The Japanese are cautious; they have no basic objection to a meeting but they doubt whether it would be effective.



R BRIGHT
Private Secretary

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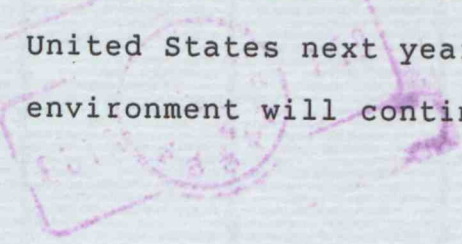
DRAFT REPLY FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO DR TOLBA

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