

PRIME MINISTER

ANGLO-FRENCH SUMMIT

Discovered
A.

You will wish to consider the attached letter about arrangements for the Anglo-French Summit at Waddesdon/Eythrope.

The proposal is to hold bilaterals at Eythrope, then drive the 5 minutes to Waddesdon for a plenary followed by a tour of the house. Depending on whether Waddesdon can be closed to the public that afternoon, the lunch could either be at Waddesdon or at Eythrope, followed by a press conference (probably in a marquee).

The alternative would be to go for Leeds Castle: but they have a rival booking, and we shall need to let them know today or tomorrow whether we want it.

The Waddesdon/Eythrope option will require some improvisation and has more risk of organisational failures: but it will undoubtedly be more fun, and would certainly give pleasure to President Mitterrand.

Agree to Waddesdon?

C.P.

CHARLES POWELL
21 FEBRUARY 1990

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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

21 February 1990

ANGLO-FRENCH SUMMIT, 4 MAY

Thank you for your letter of 20 February, taking further our discussion about the possibility of holding this year's Anglo-French Summit at Waddesdon Manor.

I have confirmed with the Prime Minister that she definitely wants to hold the Summit there, or as much of it as possible. She recognises that this is more difficult administratively than Leeds Castle, but thinks it will be infinitely more interesting for President Mitterrand.

The Prime Minister's preference would be to start at Waddesdon rather than Eythrope, and hold both the bilateral talks and the plenary session there. She would then like to allow at least one hour for a full tour of Waddesdon itself, in which she thinks President Mitterrand will be particularly interested. She would like to hold the lunch at Waddesdon as well as the press conference, provided it can be closed to the public that day, and the cost quoted by the Administrator can be substantially reduced. If not, we would use Eythrope.

I should be grateful if planning can now proceed on this as rapidly as possible. This should include the possibility of using helicopters (preferably of The Queen's flight for President Mitterrand) to bring the main French party direct into Waddesdon (or Eythrope).

The booking for Leeds Castle can now be dropped.

(C. D. POWELL)

Stephen Wall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 February 1990

Dear Charles,

Anglo-French Summit, 4 May top

Thank you for your letter of 11 February, in which you raised the possibility of holding at least half of this year's Anglo-French Summit at Waddesdon Manor.

It would certainly be feasible to hold the Summit at Waddesdon and/or Eythrope House, which is Jacob Rothschild's private house on the same estate. The main difficulty is that Waddesdon itself is in the hands of the National Trust, and is open to the public between 1.00 and 5.00 pm on weekdays. The Director General of the National Trust, Mr Angus Stirling, was initially strongly against closing Waddesdon to the public on that day but he has now modified his stance somewhat. Disruption (and cost to HMG) could be minimised by following the scenario outlined below.

The most convenient airports for Waddesdon/Eythrope are RAF Brize Norton (45 minutes' escorted drive) or RAF Benson (escorted drive takes 40 minutes, but RAF Benson is not an all-weather airport and it closes at 5.00 pm). Northolt (45-60 minutes' drive) or Upper Heyford are also possibilities, though the latter is used exclusively by the US Air Force. Travelling time would be some 30 minutes. Alternatively, the VIPs could transfer to Eythrope by helicopter (there is no helicopter pad, but the helicopters could touch down on the lawns).

We imagine that the programme would be built around simultaneous meetings between the Prime Minister/President Mitterrand and participating Ministers and their French counterparts, followed by a plenary session and lunch. Eythrope has five rooms suitable for these meetings. The largest could take 20 people round a table. For this reason, it might make sense to hold the plenary session in Waddesdon itself, some 15 minutes' drive on private roads from Eythrope. This suggests a programme along the following lines:

0930-1030	Parallel bilateral talks at Eythrope
1045	Drive to Waddesdon
1100-1200	Plenary session
1200-1230	Tour of Waddesdon Manor
1230	Return to Eythrope

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- 1300-1430 Lunch (separate lunches: principals plus one adviser each; other senior officials; support staff)
- 1500 Press conference at Eythrope (this would probably have to be held in a marquee)

If it is decided that Waddesdon Manor can, after all, be closed to the public on the day in question, the lunch and press conference could be held there too. But this would be more costly. The administrator at Waddesdon, Colonel Crawforth, originally estimated the cost of using the facilities there to be £25-30,000. I understand that Jacob Rothschild's staff have been in touch with him in New York and that he hopes a substantial reduction in this figure would be possible. Precise costings are not yet available.

As Richard Gozney mentioned in his letter of 9 February, Leeds Castle have a firm booking for 3-4 May which they have not so far confirmed. They are likely to come under heavy pressure to take a decision very soon.

Jans.
Stephen Wall
(J S Wall)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

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