

cc C Powell

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

VENICE ECONOMIC SUMMIT - MEDIA

Reference your minutes of October 13 to me (A086/2862) and to Mr Powell (A086 2871) on the above.

Ground rules for press briefing

I think we can live with the Italian proposals, even though they are potentially more restrictive than those for the London Summit.

Para 3 causes me some little concern since it is the practice of the Presidency to disclose the subjects for discussion at individual sessions. I assume the wording is intended to prohibit briefing on the substance of the discussion before the end of a particular session as distinct from background briefing on a country's approach to particular issues being discussed. I am not however over fussed by the paragraph because in my experience one of the leakiest vessels at a Summit is the Italian delegation.

Press Centre

I see no difficulty with the concept of a single press centre on the Island of San Giorgio. There is no practical alternative given the combination of an island and tight security. I am sure, however, that the restriction is also aimed at the Japanese who are inclined to be clannish and separatist.

I should say however that if the Italians hope to confine press briefing to the Island they will have to



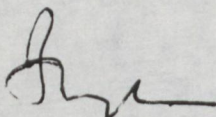
improve on the 1980 facilities which were appalling. The British briefing room was of classroom size, hot and noisy, with roughly a third of the participants leaning in through the barrack's open windows.

The Italian Government would be better able to make its "island only" rule stick if it were positively and resolutely to ban all media from delegation hotels on security grounds, except for specially arranged photo pools for bilaterals.

None of this will of course prevent briefing arrangements being set up elsewhere - eg St Mark's Square at midnight.

However, the key to the success of the Italian's "island only" rule will be the facilities provided on the island itself, and not least the broadcasting facilities, especially studios.

There is much to be said for an early conference of Spokesmen's Officers, as with previous Summits, to sort out the arrangements and the facilities. Miss Wall would be my nomination.



**B INGHAM**

15 October 1986