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*From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service*

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref. A087/1462

21 May 1987

*Dear Tony,*

Venice Economic Summit: Terrorism

The Japanese Ambassador rang this afternoon to inquire whether we had heard of the proposal by the French and German Ministers of the Interior for a meeting of Interior Ministers of the Summit Seven countries before the Venice Economic Summit. He said that the suggestion had come as a surprise to the Japanese Government, since terrorism had been discussed at the meeting of Personal Representatives in Venice the previous weekend, and the text of a draft declaration had been agreed.

I said that the suggestion had come as no less of a surprise to us. We saw no need for a meeting of Interior Ministers, as the preparations for the Economic Summit on this issue were going well: in particular, a text had been agreed at the meeting of Personal Representatives (accompanied by their terrorism "experts") in Venice last weekend. If, nonetheless, it were decided to call a meeting, we would do our best to be represented, though I was not able to say by whom, in view of the election commitments of Ministers.

I asked what the attitude of the Japanese Government was. The Ambassador did not know; but he opined that any such suggestion would have to be seriously considered by the Japanese Government, in view of the common interest in countering terrorism. He said that he would let me know if and when he learnt the decision of his Government.

I have spoken this afternoon to Ambassador Ruggiero in Rome. He also said that the suggestion for a meeting of Ministers of the Interior of the Seven came as a complete surprise to the German Government and to the Italian Government - as well as to the Elysee, who were first alerted to it when I spoke to M. Attali. His understanding was that a process of urgent reconsideration was going on, and that proposals were being considered to change the format of the meeting (if it were

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to go ahead), so that it was no longer a meeting of the Summit  
Seven Ministers of the Interior.

I am sending copies of this letter to Philip Mawer at the  
Home Office and to Charles Powell at 10 Downing Street.

*Yours ever*  
*Robert Armstrong*

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