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cc: Sir Geoffrey Littler
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From the Press Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

VENICE SUMMIT: PRESS BRIEFING

This note sets the scene for your Sherpa's media briefing on the Venice Economic Summit in the main conference room at the Treasury at 11.30am tomorrow. We are meeting in Sir Geoffrey Littler's room at 11am for a pre-conference discussion.

Mechanics

We have advertised the briefing in an operational note (Annex I) which brings out the fact not only that these official briefings are usual but that there is an election precedent for them in 1983.

The Chancellor gave an on-the-record briefing today for selected economic correspondents and Simon Dugdale's summary is at Annex II. We shall need to pick up at 11am tomorrow the media's treatment of the Chancellor's briefing.

We shall make available as people arrive the note on the media arrangements in Venice at Annex III. I hope this will cut out questions of detail.

I will preside and call questions, and brief on the Prime Minister's movements as required. No doubt Messrs Meyer and Culpin will be ready to brief on their Minister's movements.

For presentational reasons, I shall be deliberately vague about the timings of the Prime Minister's bilateral with President Reagan and only say that the Prime Minister will call upon the President on her way to the Summit on Tuesday morning.

Substance

I think the presentational problem for us at this Summit is threefold:

- given the election, what we want out of it, apart from photo opportunities to show off the world's elder stateswoman; is endorsement of UK economic policies; and an otherwise quiet ride; in other words, what do we want to major on - how to maintain non-inflationary growth or protectionism/agriculture;
- to avoid the impression that we are not seriously focused on the Summit, except to the extent it serves the Government's electoral purposes, and wish it weren't happening;
- to keep ourselves in a positive position over Gulf shipping, world monitoring of economic performance and possibly South Africa, if it is allowed to raise its ugly head.

In view of this I think it would be useful if you could brief on how many Sherpas' meetings have been held; the extent to which the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and Chancellor have been engaged on the Summit and related business, notwithstanding the election; and why the Prime Minister feels it necessary for herself and two other senior Ministers to go in the final few days of the election.

In more detail, and leaving aside the media's treatment today of the Chancellor's briefing, I think the main concerns of the media will be:

- Gulf oil supplies - President Reagan's apparent intention to seek help from Allies in keeping shipping safe;
- arms control - though this may be of less interest now that the German position has been resolved;
- state of the world economy and economic co-ordination - especially as we, along with West Germany, seem to be opposing US ideas; the need for West Germany to stimulate growth; and the implications for Britain (and unemployment) if world growth slows down. (Today's FT leader is of interest - see Annex IV).
- trade, protectionism and agriculture - though the Japanese problem has been eased by their package - but do we think it is enough?
- diseases of the age - terrorism, drugs and AIDS

- world trouble spots - Middle East, Lebanon, South Africa, Central America.

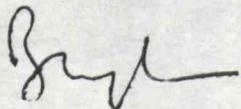
Your Opening Statement

I suggest that you make a short opening statement on:

- Summit infrastructure - number of Sherpa meetings; how the Summit has shaped up - its likely theme;
- the importance the UK attaches to the Summit and what it would like to see come out of it;
- the issues likely to be discussed and their order of examination;
- the shape and likely content of the communique or presidential declarations;
- UK Ministerial representation - Foreign Secretary all the time; Prime Minister Monday/Tuesday; Chancellor Tuesday.

You may then care to ask whether Sir Geoffrey and Messrs Thomas and Braithwaite wish to add anything.

I hope this is helpful.



BERNARD INGHAM
2 June 1987



10 DOWNING STREET

Operational Note

Not for publication

VENICE ECONOMIC SUMMIT, 8-10 JUNE 1987

The usual unattributable press briefing will be given in advance of the Venice Economic Summit by Sir Robert Armstrong and officials at 11.30 am on Wednesday 3 June in the main conference room of HM Treasury.

British and overseas media representatives are invited to attend. Please note that you will be required to show your press card to gain admission.

27 May 1987