



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

3 June 1987

Dear Robert,

Venice Economic Summit: Possible East/West Declaration

Thank you for your letter AO 87/1550 of today's date about the United States draft for a declaration on East/West Relations. You will subsequently have seen Charles Powell's letter.

We have not yet been able to consult the Foreign Secretary, but our view is that we should ask the Embassy in Washington to speak to those concerned in the US Administration as a first step. It will then be possible for us to consider in the light of the American reaction whether there is a need for a more formal written approach.

I enclose a draft telegram of instructions to Washington and would be grateful to know whether you are content for this to issue.

I am copying this letter of Charles Powell and John Howe.

Yours ever

R N Culshaw

(R N Culshaw)
Private Secretary

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO
Cabinet Office

File No.....

OUTWARD

~~Security Classification~~
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Department

Drafted by John Fretwell
(Block Capitals)

TELEGRAM

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Distribution:-

[TEXT]

Your telegram no. 1202: possible East/West
declaration at Venice.

1. On his visit to Rome yesterday Sir R^{over} Armstrong
found that the Italian Government had in fact been given
a private copy of the revised draft when Fanfani was
in Washington last week. They were unhappy about the
implications for the Venice Summit and believed that
the draft would be unacceptable to some other countries
and particularly to the French. They were fearful that
the production of this alternative draft at a late
stage would lead to the kind of wrangle which
occurred in similar circumstances at Williamsburg in
1983, with a row prolonged into the Heads of State

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or Government session on the morning of 9 June which would inevitably become publicly known - because one or other delegation would make sure it did. The result would be widespread and damaging press reports of a Summit split on East/West relations, which would overshadow the good efforts of a robust declaration on terrorism and a positive economic declaration.

The Italian Government were clearly apprehensive about the implications of this for the Italian election - and expected that the British Government would have similar apprehensions.

2. It would clearly be absurd to have a row at Venice over a text on East/West relations when the views of the participants are in practice probably closer than on any earlier occasion. If the American draft is likely to be divisive, it strengthens the case for having no declaration. That case is reinforced by the Canadian decision to press their text on South Africa. The best outcome would be to have no texts on regional political issues at all. But this would run counter to the Americans' probable wish to have a text on the Gulf.

3. In the light of these considerations please speak to the White House and the State Department to make the following points:

a) We have no difficulty with the substance of the American text provided our amendment is included.

b) But we understand that it is likely to cause difficulties for others. The Americans would be well advised to discuss it privately with the French and Germans, as well as with the Italians, before deciding whether to table it.

c) A divisive row at Venice about a text

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NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

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would be an unnecessary self-inflicted wound at a time when the views of the Seven on East/West matters are remarkably united.

d) Our conclusion is that the best course would be to avoid any declaration on East/West (or on South Africa).

We would however be willing to consider a statement on the Gulf, which is ^a more urgent and operational matter

(see separate instructions).

(in your TUR)

4. The State Department's description of their text ^{as} "a further contribution to the informal drafting process" suggests that there is slightly less steam behind it than we had supposed. You may be able to discover whether the text reflects simply a State Department effort to improve on the earlier draft or whether there is high-level political pressure for something on these lines to be issued.