

Ref. A087/3108

MR WICKS

*W in discuss  
M.S.*

*Prime Minister  
The aims proposed in  
paragraph 2 are very  
modest. Would you prefer  
an effort made to get  
back to the original concept  
of these summits i.e. an  
informal  
talk between  
Heads  
of  
Govt.  
without  
accompanying  
circumstances?*

As I told the Prime Minister at my meeting with her on Friday 30 October, the first meeting of Personal Representatives to prepare the Toronto Economic Summit 1988 has been called for 6 to 8 November in Vancouver. The meeting will be attended by Personal Representatives only. The Canadians have proposed that there should be a simultaneous meeting in Vancouver of the so-called financial sous-Sherpas (in effect, Sir Geoffrey Littler and his colleagues in the Group of Seven Deputies) to take stock of recent events in the stock and exchange markets and their implications. With the agreement of the Treasury I am discouraging this proposal: it may well not be timely for such a meeting to be held next weekend. In such circumstances meetings of G7 Deputies should be arranged to suit the needs and requirements with which they have to deal. It is neither necessary nor particularly appropriate at this time that they should meet in the shadow of the Personal Representatives: indeed, that would be in danger of sending the wrong signal.

*CDP  
2/xi*

2. The meeting of Personal Representatives will no doubt review developments since the Venice Summit and peer into the uncertain prospects. But it is far too early to judge what will be the main issues for the Toronto Summit, or to take positions on them; and this meeting will be concerned mainly with process and administration: the number of and timetable for preparatory meetings, the documentation for those meetings, arrangements for handling political issues, the arrangements for attendance, location etc of the Summit itself, and such matters as handling the press. I propose to argue in favour of retaining the same general pattern as for previous Summits, but also for a reduction in the number of preparatory meetings: I believe that it should be sufficient to have two (as compared with three in recent years) - the first



to consider a first draft of a thematic paper, and the second to finalise the draft with one eye on possible communique language. The communique itself would not be discussed until the Summit meeting.

3. I shall no doubt be asked who is to succeed me as the Prime Minister's Personal Representative. I do not know whether you are yet in a position to tell me. It seems to me that the choice lies between Mr Butler himself, Sir Geoffrey Littler and Mr R T J Wilson. I imagine that the Prime Minister will not wish to be represented by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; I doubt whether the Treasury would be very happy about that either. Sir Geoffrey Littler would do it admirably; but the Prime Minister was reluctant to put this entirely in the hands of the Treasury. In any case, Sir Geoffrey Littler may well retire by the end of 1988, and there would therefore be a need for another change quite quickly. Moreover it makes for slight (though in the end manageable) problems if the same person is both the Personal Representative and the G7 Deputy. Mr Butler would have the advantage of being seen as the natural choice, as the successor in post to the two previous Personal Representatives, and as being in fact as well as in name the Personal Representative of the Prime Minister: this undoubtedly gives the Personal Representative an advantage in his dealings with his colleagues. But Mr Butler is not keen to take this on, at any rate at first, with so much else to take on - though he has asked me to say that, if the Prime Minister would prefer him to take it on now, he would of course cheerfully do so.

4. All this leads me to suggest that Mr Wilson might be invited to do it, so long as he is in the Cabinet Office. He would be less au fait than Mr Butler on the political aspects of summitry, but he could no doubt brief himself on those, and he would be well qualified to deal with the economic aspects. One argument for asking Mr Wilson to take it on is that he will presumably not be in the Cabinet Office for more than two or three years: when he moves on there will be an opportunity to consider again whether Mr Butler, by then well settled in, should take it on himself.



5. On the way back from Vancouver I propose to visit Ottawa for 24 hours, to touch base with and say farewell to the Secretary of the Cabinet there. If I have to go to New Zealand to give evidence in the proceedings on the Attorney General's application for an injunction against The Dominion newspaper, which are due to begin on 16 November, I shall need to arrive in Wellington a few days ahead, for briefings with our legal advisers out there, and I would then propose to go straight from Canada to New Zealand, arriving there on the morning of Thursday 12 November. I am afraid that it looks as if I shall have to miss the meetings of the Cabinet on 12 and 19 November.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

2 November 1987