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Seen by PAB

PRIME MINISTER

THYSSEN COLLECTION

I had dinner with Baron von Thyssen last night. He was grateful to you for seeing him and clearly enjoyed the meeting. But it was quite clear that, if we are to secure the collection for the United Kingdom, it will have to be in or very close to London.

I should also record that Mr. Hanks-Drielsma telephoned in some agitation this morning. He felt that the discussion at the meeting had got rather out of hand with Mr. Ridley's rather random suggestions for possible sites. It would be necessary to give Thyssen, who was notoriously indecisive, a single firm recommendation. The only feasible choice was between the London or Birmingham area. It would be necessary to move quite quickly: there was a meeting of the Thyssen Trustees due in June (although we were not supposed to know this). His own contacts with the family showed that several of them, including the son, were definitely against Spain. Baroness von Thyssen - fifth edition - was of course pressing very strongly for Madrid.

C.D.I.

(C. D. POWELL)

16 March 1988

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