

2020

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CONFIDENTIAL

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FM ROME TO FCOLN

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CONFIDENTIAL

FM ROME

TO TELELETTER FCO

TELELETTER NFR

OF 301600Z DECEMBER 85

*Mr. Herbert ar.*  
*Reply sent*  
*of the consultation with*  
*No 10.*  
*(Am 31)*

*WRT 0201*

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- 7 JAN 1986		
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FOLLOWING FOR D J M DAIN ESQ, WED, FCO

NFR DATED 30 DECEMBER 1985

FROM T L RICHARDSON, ROME.

ANGLO/ITALIAN SUMMIT.

1. AS I EXPLAINED TO HERBERT BEFORE CHRISTMAS, IT WILL NOT (NOT) BE POSSIBLE TO TAKE ACTION WITH CRAXI'S DIPLOMATIC OFFICE UNTIL THE NEW YEAR ON THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT ANGLO/ITALIAN SUMMIT. WE SHALL DO SO THEN BUT MEANWHILE I SHOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON THE PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE ARRANGEMENTS SET OUT IN POWELL'S LETTER TO APPELYARD OF 19 DECEMBER, A COPY OF WHICH I HAVE JUST SEEN. I HAVE DISCUSSED WHAT FOLLOWS WITH THE AMBASSADOR, WHO RETURNS FROM LOCAL LEAVE ON 2 JANUARY.

2. TO CONFINE A SUMMIT IN ITALY TO A SINGLE DAY WILL REQUIRE A VERY TIGHT PROGRAMME AND AN EARLY START FROM LONDON, AND I AM NOT SURE THAT THE FRENCH AND GERMAN PRECEDENTS WHICH POWELL MENTIONS ARE VALID GIVEN THE MUCH LONGER TRAVELLING TIME REQUIRED IN BOTH DIRECTIONS, WHETHER TO FLORENCE OR ROME. A POSSIBLE PROGRAMME MIGHT BE:-

0700: PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY LEAVES LONDON

1030 LOCAL TIME: ARRIVAL IN ITALY.

1130: TALKS BEGIN (PRIME MINISTER WITH CRAXI, OTHER MINISTERS WITH THEIR ITALIAN COLLEAGUES).

1330-1500: LUNCH (BUT SEE BELOW)

1600-1800: FURTHER TALKS, INCLUDING PLENARY SESSION.

1815-1845: PRESS CONFERENCE.

1900: PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY LEAVES FOR AIRPORT.

2000: TAKE-OFF, ARRIVING IN LONDON 2130.



3. THE ITALIANS WILL FIND THESE ARRANGEMENTS INCONVENIENT. THE MORNING SESSION WILL BE CROWDED IF PRIME MINISTERS AND FOREIGN MINISTERS ARE TO HAVE SEPARATE TETE A TETES BEFORE JOINING EACH OTHER FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION. THE LUNCH COULD WELL START LATE, OR DRAG ON (WHICH IS WHY I HAVE ALLOWED AN EXTRA HOUR BEFORE TALKS RESUME IN THE AFTERNOON), AND IN OUR EXPERIENCE ITALIAN MINISTERS SELDOM WANT TO MAKE THEMSELVES AVAILABLE FOR BUSINESS IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON, PREFERRING EVENING DISCUSSIONS BEFORE DINNER. I ASSUME THAT WE SHALL HAVE TO RESIST AN ITALIAN OFFER OF DINNER FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY, SINCE IT WOULD THEN BE UNLIKELY TO ARRIVE IN HEATHROW MUCH BEFORE MIDNIGHT. IF THE SUMMIT WERE HELD IN ROME, THE PARTY MIGHT WELL HAVE NO TIME TO STOP OFF AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, AND PRIVATE OFFICE AND PRESS FACILITIES WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE BASED ON THIS EMBASSY.

4. ABOVE ALL, THERE IS THE POLITICAL POINT THAT THIS WILL BE THE FIRST ANGLO/ITALIAN SUMMIT FOR OVER A YEAR: THE LAST ONE TOOK PLACE IN LONDON ON FEBRUARY 13-14. THE ITALIANS WERE DISAPPOINTED AT OUR POSTPONEMENT OF THE SUMMIT ORIGINALLY FIXED FOR OCTOBER. IN THEORY, THESE SUMMITS ARE SUPPOSED TO TAKE PLACE VERY SIX MONTHS: IN PRACTICE, AN INTERVAL OF NINE MONTHS HAS BEEN THE RECENT NORM. ON THIS OCCASION THIRTEEN MONTHS WILL HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THE LAST SUMMIT. WE DO NOT WANT TO GIVE THE ITALIANS THE IMPRESSION THAT THESE SUMMITS HAVE BECOME AN UNWELCOME CHORE.

5. BEFORE WE SPEAK TO CHIGI OFFICIALS, THEREFORE, COULD YOU ASCERTAIN FROM NO. 10 WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER'S DECISION IS IMMUTABLE?. I AM SURE THAT THE ITALIANS WILL THEMSELVES ASK US WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY COULD NOT ARRIVE ON THE EVENING OF 11 MARCH, IN WHICH CASE IT COULD CERTAINLY LEAVE ITALY IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON OF THE FOLLOWING DAY. LITTLE OR NO WORKING TIME WOULD BE LOST THEREBY, AND THE PROGRAMME WOULD BE FAR MORE RESTFUL.

6. I HAVE NOT DISCUSSED THE QUESTION OF FLORENCE VERSUS ROME. WE SHALL SEND OUR ADVICE AFTER WE HAVE CONSULTED THE CHIGI AND HMC FLORENCE. THE TIMING WILL BE TIGHT WHICHEVER VENUE WE CHOOSE.

SIGNED: T L RICHARDSON

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