

ANDREW TURNBULL

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MRS THATCHER: 31 JANUARY

Westminster City Council are conferring the freedom of the City of Westminster on Mrs Thatcher, and (at her request they said) invited the Prime Minister to suggest a date in April on which he could attend the ceremony at 1200 noon, possibly staying on to lunch. The Prime Minister agreed to do this, and we offered Westminster City Council Monday 29 April (which would entail cancelling a colleagues' lunch slot). However, Westminster City Council said that, for important Council reasons which could not be disclosed, the ceremony had to take place before 24 April.

I explained to Amanda that it was virtually impossible for us to manage that sort of timing before 24 April, and wondered how strongly Mrs Thatcher felt about the Prime Minister's attendance at the ceremony. Amanda was unaware that Mrs Thatcher had suggested it (though Mrs Thatcher had dined with Lady Porter recently, when it may have been raised), and a little surprised that she would want to share the honours on a rather personal occasion. In any case, Amanda had no doubt that, given the timing difficulties, Mrs Thatcher would quite understand if the Prime Minister was unable to attend. I have, therefore, regretted the invitation.

Since the Prime Minister is seeing Mrs Thatcher tomorrow, he may wish to raise this briefly.


SANDRA PHILLIPS

30 January 1991