

Sir Humphrey Appleby, Jim Hacker

Humphrey knocks and enters

Jim Ah, Humphrey, do sit down.

Humphrey Prime Minister.

Jim Let's talk about this loan. It is all good news, isn't it?

Humphrey Tremendous news.

Jim There are no hidden snags? You know. Terms and conditions, penalty clauses, tough guarantees?

Humphrey Oh no. Nothing like that. Standard agreement.

Jim Great. An ordinary treasury loan. As far as we're concerned?

Humphrey In a sense. Yes.

Jim (*pouncing*) In a sense?

Humphrey In due course. Following agreed procedures. After certain formalities.

Jim But the money goes straight to the Treasury?

Humphrey It goes to the Treasury, yes.

Jim *Straight* to the Treasury?

Humphrey Broadly speaking, yes. More or less.

Jim **Broadly speaking?** How would you describe it if you were narrowly speaking?

Humphrey is silent

Does it have to go through the European Central Bank?

Humphrey We get the money, that's what matters.

Jim Let me put this another way. Will the loan be in euros?

Humphrey Prime Minister, I urge you not to clutter your mind with procedural detail and monetary trivia.

Jim Humphrey. In words of one syllable, is this plan dependent on our abandoning sterling and joining the euro?

Humphrey (*chuckling*) De-pen-dent has three syllables and a-ban-don-ing has four. Seriously, though, Prime Minister "" (*checking his watch*) ... it's almost time for your dinner with the Foreign Minister of Kumranistan, you really mustn't be late.

Jim **Humphrey!** Answer my question.

Humphrey All right. Prime Minister, you've asked a straight question and I'll give you a straight

answer which, however, clearly has to be considered in its proper context. In the course of all financial negotiations, certain provisos have to be pre-cogitated and preconditioned, various caveats have to be postulated, designated, investigated and specified and a number of unequivocal considerations have to be determined, acknowledged and indeed sometimes conceded so that we are able to facilitate the finalization of preliminary plans to create an epistemological basis for all parties to proceed towards a mutually beneficial consummation which will acknowledge and safeguard the vital interests of all the participants without jeopardizing in any material way the underlying collective benefit ultimately accruing to the signatories or leaving unresolved certain anomalies and irregularities that might precipitate operational uncertainties down the line, so that there will be a presumed modicum of ironclad reciprocity which, in the broad scheme of things, will be to everybody's advantage.

Jim Did that mean yes or no?