

103
Personal + Confidential

Mr Christopher

Mr Armour

MSW
T. M. 30/1



WES

cc, Private Secretary

Sir J Bonhard

Sir C Tidwell

Mr Hannay

Mr Jenkins

ESD(1)

CCPM
Tous:
Paris:
Jan 84

70 WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service to Sir J Bonhard.

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref. A084/319

27 January 1984

WES = 02713
RECEIVED IN REGISTRY
30 JAN 1984

My dear Antony,

Visit of President Mitterrand

I had a word both with you and John Coles yesterday about his letter of 25 January to Brian Fall.

It is very tiresome that we are not able to deal with these matters straightforwardly. But I think that it is in our interest to preserve and foster bilateral relationships between No 10 Downing Street and the Elysee, and that that means that we have to take account of the Elysée's obsession with secrecy and its distrust of the French bureaucracy.

On the other hand we must do our best to get the arrangements for visits of this kind into sensible channels. As we saw from the Prime Minister's recent visit to Paris, if we do not do so things are likely to go wrong.

I should like to propose that we handle matters as follows. In the first instance I should speak to Attali, and say that the Prime Minister has been thinking further about the possibility of a second talk between her and the President before the Brussels European Council. She thinks that such a talk is likely to be useful, and she would like to invite the President to a private and informal visit to Chequers early in March, much on the lines of her own visit to Paris the other day. She would therefore like to invite the President for talks at Chequers on the morning of Monday 5 March, followed by lunch. If that were not possible for the President, she would propose a similar arrangement for Friday 9 March. I would go on to say that, if the President is able to accept this invitation in principle, there will be detailed arrangements to make in which neither he nor I need to get involved. I will say that for our part we should like to put our end of the arrangements

/under the

Sir Antony Acland KCMG KCVO

Personal + Confidential

Personal + confidential

under the charge of John Fretwell, who will be under strict instructions to observe absolute discretion on the subject of the visit. I will then invite Attali to name the contact on his side.

One advantage of proceeding in this way would be that Attali is coming to London for the meeting of Personal Representatives in the middle of February, and that would give me an opportunity to discuss the matter further with him, if there were any problems.

I am sending you a copy of his letter to John Coles.
Yours ever

Robert

Personal + confidential