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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Bonnie Minister

A useful dossier.

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Dear Michael,

New French President

The Prime Minister may like to see the attached set of papers giving background to the election of the new French President. Further work is in hand on the constitutional aspects, some of which are open to differing interpretation, and the Embassy in Paris will be reporting fully on the political manoeuvring between now and the formation of a new Government after the legislative elections.

Yours ever,

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C O N T E N T S

- A. A guide to the French Socialist Party and personalities
- B. Mr Gladstone's submission of 1 May on foreign policies of the French Socialist Party
- C. The Leading Personalities Report on M. Mitterrand
- D. M. Mitterrand's likely economic policies
- E. A guide to the French Communist Party
- F. The Constitution: the President and the Prime Minister
- G. The constitutional position pending fresh legislative elections

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SHORT GUIDE TO THE FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY

History

1. The French Socialist Party (PS) in its present form dates from the 1971 Congress of Épinay when M Mitterrand became the Party's First Secretary. Since then he has not only held together a heterogeneous mixture of groups and individuals under one banner but has made the PS the largest party in France in electoral terms. At the 1969 Presidential elections the Socialist candidate, Gaston Defferre had polled only 5% of all votes compared with the Communist candidate's 21.5%. At the 1978 legislative elections to the National Assembly the PS polled 28.3% compared with the Gaullists' 26.1% and the Communists' 18.6%.

2. Socialism in France dates back to 1905 when the SFIO (Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière) was founded. The SFIO provided both Presidents and Prime Ministers under the Third and Fourth Republics (ie from 1875-1958). But the only true government of the left during that period was the Popular Front government of 1936-38 headed by the Socialist, Léon Blum.

3. Apart from the immediate post-war period (1945-47), when the Communists participated briefly in government, the SFIO tended to ally itself with the Centre parties eg the Radicals and the Republicans. In 1965 the SFIO under Guy Mollet joined with a number of other non-Communist left-wing groups, including one headed by François Mitterrand, to form the FGDS (Fédération de la Gauche Démocratique et Socialiste). The FGDS was short-lived and broke up under the pressure of the student-led disturbances of May 1968. A new Socialist party was formed in 1969 around the SFIO.

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-3-

the movement and favours co-operation with the Communists.

(c) Mitterrand's own 'current' is in the radical, republican, somewhat elitist tradition. In its present form it dates from 1965.

(d) Michael Rocard's group, formed in 1974 when he and a few close associates left the small left-wing PSU to join the PS, favours decentralisation and workers' self-management and is against excessive state power. It is social-democratic and relatively pragmatic in its economic policy.

7. There is also a left-wing Christian tradition. Though mainly associated with Rocard, this is also, paradoxically, reflected in CERES. The older parties such as the SFIO - and the PCF - were traditionally, but not exclusively, anti-clerical.

8. Notes on leading Socialist Party personalities are annexed.

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PIERRE MAUROY (53)

Mayor of Lille. Number 2 in the Party. A long-standing Socialist in the worker/social democrat tradition. Previously deputy to Guy Mollet in the SF10. Has his own following in the Party but is basically loyal to Mitterrand and was his spokesman during the recent presidential campaign.

MICHEL ROCARD (50)

Mitterrand's rival for the Socialist party nomination for the 1981 presidential election. Previously, in 1969, was the presidential candidate of the small left-wing party, the PSU (Parti Socialiste Unifié). Bourgeois protestant background. Father a physicist responsible for developing the French atom bomb. Ex-ENA; economic specialist; brilliant Inspecteur des Finances (like Giscard d'Estaing). A social democrat with liberal economic policies but supports workers' self-management. Appeals to centre voters; anathema to the Communists and Marxists. Close personally and philosophically to Edmond Maire, leader of CFDT, the second largest trade union confederation. Both left PSU and joined PS in 1974 and are regarded with suspicion by some longer-standing party members.

JEAN-PIERRE CHEVENEMENT (41)

Leader of the left-wing CERES group (vs) whose support in the PS is declining. An economic specialist; also interested in defence. Ex-ENA. Responsible for drafting the current party manifesto. Critical of the EC. Good personal relations with Mitterrand and Defferre despite philosophical differences.

LIONEL JOSPIN (43)

Took over from Mitterrand as First Secretary of the PS in 1981 when Mitterrand resigned to stand for the Presidency. Ex-ENA. Left the Foreign Ministry, where he was a civil servant, in 1968 to
/become

become a teacher. Joined PS after 1969, where he has specialised in relations with the Third World and, later, in Socialist-Communist relations.

JACQUES ATTALI (37)

Economist (non-Marxist). Brilliant ex-pupil of several top educational establishments including ENA (Ecole Nationale d'Administration). Joined PS in 1973. Confidant of Mitterrand since 1974, when he helped him with his Presidential campaign.

CLAUDE CHEYSSON (61)

Responsible for development questions in the European Commission. Good contacts in the Third World, especially in Africa. Ex-ENA. Quick minded and articulate; personally vain; can be devious.

JEAN-PIERRE COT (43)

Father was Pierre Cot, Air Minister in the Popular Front government. Deputy for Savoy at the National Assembly. Professor of international law and politics at the Sorbonne. Socialist in the liberal bourgeois tradition; joined PS in 1969; supporter of Michel Rocard. Spokesman on European questions. Speaks excellent English.

GEORGES DAYAN (65)

A friend of Mitterrand since they trained in the law and did their military service together. Has followed Mitterrand in all his political affiliations. Has an importance in the PS far beyond his official party position. Is one of two official personal representatives nominated by Mitterrand. (A similar relationship to the one between M. Poniatoski and Giscard d'Estaing).

GASTON DEFFERRE (70)

Mayor of Marseilles. Member of the SF10 since 1933 and of several Third and Fourth Republic governments. Advocate of centre-left alliance in the early 1960s, but rallied to Mitterrand following
/his



his own poor showing (5% of votes) at the 1969 Presidential elections. His third wife is Edmonde Charles-Roux, whose novel 'Oublier Palerme' won the Prix Goncourt in 1966. The couple are personal friends of Mitterrand.

JACQUES DELORS (55)

Former adviser on social and cultural affairs to M. Chaban-Delmas, the Gaullist Prime Minister (1969-72). Professor of economics at Paris University. Joined PS in 1974. In the militant christian/trade union tradition. Highly thought of.

CLAUDE ESTIER (55)

A long and distinguished career in left-wing journalism. Director of the party's weekly journal, L'Unité. Good links with other journalists. In the Resistance. Close to Mitterrand. Has long favoured a political alliance with the Communists.

CHARLES HERNU (57)

PS spokesman on defence matters. Joined the PS together with Mitterrand and his CIR (Convention des Institutions Républicaines). A personal friend of Mitterrand. Since 1977 municipal elections (when PS made significant gains) has been Mayor of Villeurbanne. A confessed freemason.

EDITH CRESSON (46)

From a socialist bourgeois background; active in politics since 1967. Promoted to the PS Secretariat (the Party's top leadership) in 1975. Sponsored by Mitterrand as a "token woman". Responsible first for youth and student organisation. Fought hard, but unsuccessfully, to win a Gaullist stronghold in 1977 local elections.

FRANÇOISE GASPARD (35)

Ex-ENA. Energetic Mayor of Dreux since 1977, when she was promoted to the Party's Executive Committee. An up-and-coming lady.



FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY IN THE EVENT OF A MITTERRAND VICTORY

1. Our Embassy in Paris have declined to comment on the policies Mitterrand would adopt if elected on the grounds that the question is hypothetical. Sir R Hibbert dealt fleetingly with the question at the end of his recent despatch (extract attached). There is force in this argument; M Mitterrand's policies in practice would depend much on the scale of his victory, the degree of Communist participation in Government, the results of subsequent National Assembly elections, etc.

2. With that caveat, the broad lines of Parti Socialiste (PS) foreign policy as expounded to date can be summarised briefly as follows (this summary is based partly on the Projet Socialiste of January 1980 and partly on an interview given by M Mitterrand to Le Monde on 30 July 1980).

General

3. The PS has devoted less time to formulation of foreign than of domestic policies. No radical reversal of existing French foreign policies is planned but PS policies are remarkably Gaullist in essentials, if backed up by socialist rationalisation. M Mitterrand's thinking on foreign policy, particularly on East/West relations, has evolved since Afghanistan. Over the past year he has adopted an increasingly critical attitude towards the Soviet Union.

NATO and Trans-Atlantic Affairs

4. In the long term, M Mitterrand looks to the disbandment of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. In the meantime he has stressed that if he were elected, France would be a faithful ally of her NATO partners and would respect her Treaty obligations. He has no intention of withdrawing France from NATO but France



would not return on NATO's integrated military structure. Last summer he called for an urgent re-examination of the relations between the members of the Atlantic Alliance at a NATO summit. He claims that NATO is at present based on the illusion that the Americans would intervene in Europe in the event of Soviet aggression.

East/West Relations

5. M Mitterrand has criticised the French Government for its slowness in condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He called President Giscard's meeting with Brezhnev in Warsaw a mistake because it had brought comfort to an aggressor. France should officially recognise the Afghanistan Resistance Movement. If the Soviet Union were to intervene militarily in Poland, this would call in question future discussion of security issues between the Soviet Union and the West as well as East/West technological and commercial agreements.

Defence/Disarmament

6. M Mitterrand has made the withdrawal of Soviet SS20 missiles his top priority in the arms control field. He might be prepared for French participation in global negotiations on nuclear disarmament. However, the imbalance between Eastern and Western force levels in Europe needs to be restored. France has no choice but to rely on nuclear deterrence for the protection of her territory and restraints on French systems in the context of any East/West arms control arrangements would be unacceptable. M Mitterrand has warned against a policy of total self-reliance such as could lead France to 'a kind of neutrality with regard to world affairs and in particular in relation to her closest friends'.

Europe/EC

7. M Mitterrand has criticised the French Government for developing an exclusive Paris/Bonn axis within the EC, which

has undermined the principle of the equality of its members. UK membership of the EC is to be desired. But the EC must stand firm against UK efforts (backed by the US) to transform the EC into a free trade area. He looks to the EC to provide a counter-weight to the hegemony of the two super-powers and, if elected, would propose to France's EC partners a variety of measures designed to strengthen the Community, including defence and reform of the CAP; closer EC co-operation on industrial policy, energy and research; concerted action to stimulate EC economies, and renewed discussion on access by French fishing boats to 'Community' waters. However, given M. Mitterrand's determination to preserve underlying French interests, it is unlikely that he would prove to be an easier partner for the UK Middle East than M. Giscard.

8. M Mitterrand is more strongly committed to Israel than any other presidential candidate and supports Camp David. The Palestinian people should however have a right to exist as a nation.

Latin America

9. M Mitterrand has strongly condemned US military aid to the government of El Salvador.

International Monetary Fund

10. The PS wants reform of the IMF and World Bank, increased aid to all third world countries and a moratorium on existing debts of poorest countries. Sections of the party would like to restore the rôle of gold.

Africa

11. PS has criticized 'neo-colonialist' French military interventions; supports Chadian independence (and indeed self-determination everywhere).

10. The consequences of a Mitterrand victory are so uncertain that it is unprofitable to try to peep too far ahead. What is certain is that a Mitterrand victory would produce a completely different kind of Fifth Republic from the one which has existed since 1958. The balance of power between the President and the National Assembly would be substantially altered and conflict between them might become endemic. This probably does not mean that there would be a return to the political habits of the Fourth Republic. It would be more likely to produce a trial of strength outside Parliament. There would be a disorderly situation in which M. Chirac and the RPR might make a bid to be the saviours of France from socialist revolution. This is why some people toy with the daring idea of voting for M. Chirac on the First Round and, if he loses, letting M. Mitterrand in on the Second. But this is not a very likely eventuality. Probability favours a victory by M. Giscard and a resultant political situation corresponding to one or other of the models canvassed in paragraphs 4 to 8 above.



MITTERRAND, FRANÇOIS
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

Born 1916. Son of a railway official who later ran the family vinegar concern. Journalist and lawyer. A prisoner of war 1940-2. Obtained the Vichy decoration, the Francisque, for his work for prisoners and deportees. Took an active part in the Resistance, which included missions to London and Algiers 1943. Appointed Secretary-General for Prisoners and Deportees by General de Gaulle 1944. Croix de Guerre 1939-45 and Rosette de la Résistance. Under the 4th Republic M. Mitterrand was a member of several administrations, some of them far from left wing. When he first took office, he was the youngest Minister to be appointed since the 19th century. Among his Ministerial posts his principal ones were Minister for Ex-Servicemen and War Victims (1947-8), Minister for Overseas France (1950-51), and Minister of the Interior (1954-55). M. Mitterrand was one of the few French politicians to oppose General de Gaulle's return to power in 1958, not so much because he did not favour strengthening the executive at the expense of Parliament but because he considered that General de Gaulle had been imposed on France by the Armed Forces.

M. Mitterrand was an important though not a major figure of the IVth Republic. As M. Mendès France's Minister of the Interior, he was tough and dynamic, unencumbered by scruple and never afraid to make enemies. He shook up the official establishment of the police from top to bottom, and many of those involved have still not forgiven him. When serving M. Mollet he differed with him over Algerian policy and was critical of the Suez operation. Thereafter he joined M. Mendès France in heading the small non-Communist opposition group in the Assembly until May 1958. At that point he was the principal advocate of the Government's standing firm against the Army and General de Gaulle, and he was even talked of as the possible head of a 'popular front' government against the Army.

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-2-

With General de Gaulle's success and the loss of his own parliamentary seat M. Mitterrand briefly withdrew from public life. In 1959, after his election to the Senate, he was involved in a notorious case (L'Affaire de l'Observatoire), which involved the machine-gunning of his car in mysterious circumstances. The subsequent enquiry did him no credit and the official investigation rumbled on for some time thereafter, leaving a certain amount of mud sticking to him.

The 1962 referendum providing for the election of the President by universal suffrage meant that from then on Mitterrand's eyes were fixed on the Presidency. His first attempt came in 1965, when he polled 7.7 million votes (32 per cent) on the first round and 10.5 million votes (45 per cent) on the second. He never expected to beat General de Gaulle: but his powerful performance won him the role of unofficial Leader of the Opposition. He became the President of the Fédération de la Gauche which performed so effectively in the 1967 legislative elections that the Government emerged with a majority of one seat only. But the Fédération was already coming apart at the seams when the events of May and June 1968 precipitated its final collapse, and seemingly, M. Mitterrand's prospects. Mitterrand did not run in the subsequent Presidential election of 1969. But he began a political comeback by winning the leadership of the Socialist Party at the Epinay Congress of 1971. Having displaced M. Mollet he renovated the Party without alienating the old guard and was Presidential candidate again in 1974, in whose second round he scored 49.2% behind Giscard's 50.8%.

M. Mitterrand has always maintained that the only way the socialists could hope to come to power was with the support of those voters who had traditionally supported the PCF. From 1972-7 he took the PS into alliance with the PCF, but the alliance collapsed before the 1978 legislative elections when M. Mitterrand rejected the PCF's attempts to dictate the terms of the revision of the common programme of government which had been drawn up in 1972. Since then,

/relations

relations between M. Mitterrand and the PCF at leadership level have been strained. But M. Mitterrand has never abandoned his belief that the PS could not afford to turn its back on PCF voters.

M. Mitterrand is not a doctrinaire socialist. Keen on books and painting, addicted to writing and reputedly pleasure loving, he seems to be mostly a humanist with egalitarian instincts and a sense of public responsibility. He is on the side of the under-dog and is concerned about the welfare of people in general, but he is by nature aloof. He has few personal friends and is not much inclined to share confidences. His unrivalled stature within the PS has created a court like atmosphere where those in favour rise fast, but those who cross him are excluded from his counsels. There is no doubt about his understanding of the elements of power and his ability and willingness to use them.


During the 1981 election campaign M. Mitterrand managed to appear very calm and self-possessed. There was a good deal of art in this, but also a fair amount of nature. He has remained a tough and ruthless politician capable of biting criticism of his opponents. But this side of his character has been little in evidence recently. On the whole he succeeded in presenting a reassuring image to the electorate.

There is no sign that he has thought very much about relations with the UK. M. Mitterrand speaks little English and Britain does not seem to have attracted a great deal of attention from him, but when he visited the UK in October 1977 as a guest of the Labour Party he made a good and amiable impression on the Labour Ministers in power at the time.

Keen interest in local affairs. Mayor of Château-Chinon, President of the Conseil Général of the Nièvre, Conseiller Général of Montsauche and member of the Regional
/Council



Council of Burgundy. One brother, General Mitterrand, is President of Aérospatiale, the nationalised aircraft company, one is President of Havas and one a professor at the Sorbonne. He is married to a retiring wife, who had a good resistance record and who loves country life at their homes in the Morvan and in the Landes near Bordeaux. They have two sons.



PRESIDENT MITTERRAND'S ECONOMIC POLICIES

1. President Mitterrand's economic policies will be determined by the governing coalition that emerges from the new National Assembly as much as by the Socialist manifesto. The latter has two main elements: an attack on unemployment coupled with a commitment to increase economic growth; and increased government control over the economy. Of these elements, the first (expansion of the economy) might appeal to the Gaullists as well as to left wing parties; but the second would have no appeal to the right wing of the Assembly.

2. Among the manifesto measures on employment and growth are public employment programmes (an extra 150,000 jobs), a 35 hour week, increased public works (housing, public buildings), increased social payments to lower paid and poor (increased family allowances, pensions) and an increase in the minimum wage. Interestingly, some trades union leaders have already counselled caution in pursuing these aims lest they heighten inflation.

3. According to the manifesto, increased government control of the economy is to be pursued via the nationalisation of 9 major industrial groups, the steel industry, parts of the arms and space industries and all the insurance companies and banks remaining in the private sector. Price controls are promised in areas where there is sufficient competition.


4. The prospect of such a programme led to considerable disruption of the financial markets immediately after the election. But the Bourse has settled down again - at a lower level - as investors have second thoughts. Many of the firms on the list are already subject to a degree of government control and the major banks are already nationalised. Some existing nationalised concerns, eg Renault, are



both successful and largely autonomous. One of M Mitterrand's economic advisers has given a public assurance that shareholders would be fairly compensated.

5. Nevertheless, in the longer term an expansionary programme of the kind foreseen in the manifesto would put considerable pressure on fiscal policy and public expenditure in particular (a group of economists - admittedly opposed to Mitterrand - has estimated that the programme would entail a government deficit of almost 400 billion francs, more than 10% of likely 1981 GDP, compared with a 1981 forecast of 29 billion francs in M Barre's last budget).

6. Given that the manifesto also promises to defend the Franc against speculation, and assuming that the Socialists would probably be reluctant to take the Franc out of EMS, a substantial increase in the public sector deficit would appear to require high interest rates if the exchange rate is to be defended and inflation restrained. A high exchange rate policy would also clash with the desire to increase output. Reconciling these conflicting aims will require masterly management of the economy.



THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY (PCF)

SIZE AND STRENGTH

Since its foundation in 1921 the PCF has only participated in government for 3 years (1944-47). Nevertheless, since the war it consistently polled between a fifth and a quarter of the French electorate until the 1981 presidential elections (15%). Since the 1977 municipal elections the PCF has controlled 72 of the 220 largest towns and at the 1978 legislative elections it gained 86 of the 491 seats in the National Assembly. The PCF also dominates the largest trade union confederation, the CGT, with an estimated membership of 2.25 million. In 1978 the Party claimed a membership of 630,000, compared with the Socialist Party's membership of 250,000.

RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION

The PCF started life as the French Section of the Communist International and, in its early years, came under the direct orders of the Comintern. The Party's First Secretary-General, Maurice Thorez, who ran the party from 1930 till his death in 1964, was an unconditional supporter of Stalin and a significant member of the PCF's present leaders, including Marchais, the present Secretary-General, were brought up under his influence. An example of the extent to which the PCF was subordinated to Soviet rather than to national interests came in August 1939 with the Hitler-Stalin pact. The Party was obliged, despite a dramatic loss of membership, to do an ideological U-turn and to start campaigning for peace with the Germans. The Party line did not change officially until Hitler invaded Russia in June 1941. Throughout the Cold War period, and beyond, the PCF aligned itself with Moscow, condemning the heresies of Titoism and Chinese Communism, and at home attacking French foreign policy across the board. Even after the Soviet Party Congress of 1956, at which Khrushchev exposed Stalin's past crimes, the PCF under Thorez remained Stalinist. Dissenters were stifled or ejected from the Party.



An unofficial electoral agreement with the Socialists in 1965 marked the beginning of a slightly softer line from the PCF, together with the first cautious criticism of the Soviet Union. From 1975 the PCF started to make verbal concessions to democratic parliamentary principles and to voice cautious criticism of the Soviet Union's treatment of dissidents. The PCF's new independent line gained credibility from its association with the Italian and Spanish Communist parties (Eurocommunism). But the withdrawal of the PCF from its alliance with the Socialists in Autumn 1977 and the ensuing failure of the Left to win the 1978 legislative elections in France marked a hardening of PCF attitudes and the beginning of a rapprochement with the Soviet Union. Despite continued claims to put national interests first, the PCF has realigned itself with the Soviet Union on foreign policy and inter-party issues eg. its acceptance of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and its co-sponsorship of a Soviet-inspired European Communist Conference on Peace and Disarmament in April 1980.

FINANCE

The PCF is probably subsidised by the Soviet Union, via trading companies, Soviet banks in Paris and the millionaire Communist Jean Doumeng, who negotiates deals involving agricultural surpluses between the EC and the Soviet Union and other less overt channels. But the PCF has extensive financial resources in its own right, through property and commercial enterprises, as well as contributions from members.

Domestic circumstances, rivalry with the Socialist party, internal struggles between the new more open-minded party members and officials and the older hardliners and, not least, Marchais' own erratic personality underlie the PCF's abrupt changes of policy over the past five years and these factors will no doubt continue to influence it in the future.



ANNEX F. THE CONSTITUTION: THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER

1. The constitutional powers of the President as they have evolved under the Fifth Republic are very extensive, much greater than those of the American President, for example. The 1958 Constitution was tailor-made to suit de Gaulle when he returned to power to deal with the problem of Algeria; it was designed to reduce the powers of the National Assembly and to strengthen those of the Government. De Gaulle's interpretation of the President's rôle in government extended it further and his successors have continued in the same tradition, assuming the right of the President to rule as well as reign.
2. The Constitution of the Fifth Republic has so far worked on the assumption that the President would in practice be able to select a Prime Minister of his own choosing as is his constitutional right. Should legislative elections produce a clear majority for the right however, it could be politically rather than constitutionally difficult (if not impossible) for President Mitterrand to appoint a Socialist Prime Minister, without risking serious disturbances on the streets. In those circumstances he might look for a candidate from the political centre, acceptable to both left and right; or alternatively for a technocrat without political allegiances.
3. Since de Gaulle's time, the President has been the Head of Government in a very active sense, presiding over Cabinet meetings and representing France at international summits. However, it is the Prime Minister who, according to the Constitution, selects all the other Ministers and the President cannot require them to resign. Although the constitution provides for the President to preside over Cabinet meetings, there is nothing to prevent the Prime Minister meeting his Ministers without the President being present. The Constitution is silent as to whether the President or the Prime Minister should represent France at



Heads of Government meetings.

4. In the last resort the President has the power to rule by decree. More practically the President has the power (which the Prime Minister does not have) to dissolve the National Assembly. Having once dissolved it, however, he cannot do so again until the newly elected Assembly has been in existence for a year.