



10 DOWNING STREET

Alam. AD 13/4

As per MAP — there
is no chance of finding the
bp copies of the attached
(A03306 and A03307)
PM is prepared to accept that
she may have thrown them on
the fire at chequers.

Gus.

8/4/82.

21-10-80

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Action Overlaid

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CABINET OFFICE
Ref A03307.....
PRIME MINISTER
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

File
C. S. H. Brinkley
W. H. G. G. G.

Some months ago the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said to you, and you were inclined to agree, that in the troubled state of the world we should need to develop our relations and the closeness of our consultations with both the French and the German Governments, not just on European Community issues but also on major issues of international relations (East-West, South-West Asia, the Gulf and the Middle East in particular).

2. That was before the meetings in May at which the argument about our budget contribution to the Community had been resolved. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary reverted to the subject in the "planning paper" which he sent you on 4th August.

3. The success of the consultations with the President of the French Republic and his Ministerial colleagues last month and the return of the Federal Chancellor for a further term of office provide us with a reason for reviewing our policy on these matters and with openings to develop closer links, if we are disposed to take them.

4. In that context I was struck by what Monsieur Wahl said to me when we were talking on 19th September. He was quite categoric, and left me in no doubt that he was His Master's Voice. He said that the Franco-German relationship was a foundation stone of European co-operation, and had grown steadily closer through the years. But he went on to emphasise that it was never intended to be exclusive, and that the President of the Republic wanted to see France working as closely with Britain as with Germany, and the Federal Chancellor wanted the same sort of relationship with Britain as he had with France. Indeed, Monsieur Wahl said that the President felt that he had offered this to you earlier but that you had not taken up the offer.

5. I draw from all this four conclusions:

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- (1) we now have the opportunity to develop closer links with the French Government and with the German Government, in a way that could put our relationships with them on the same sort of footing (without the formalities of a treaty) as theirs with each other;
- (2) it is to our advantage to develop closer links with the French and German Governments, both within the Community and in other international relations, so that in effect the Franco-German axis becomes for as many purposes as possible an Anglo-French-German partnership;
- (3) the next move is up to us: the President of the Republic will think that he has offered us the opportunity, will be waiting for a possible response from us, and will construe failure to respond positively as a positive rebuff;
- (4) we should come forward with specific suggestions for the ways in which closer links could be established.

6. The lead will have to come from the top. Both the French and the German machines will respond at lower levels if they get the lead from the top: the French machine at any rate, left to itself, would probably not respond without such a lead. Both in Paris and in Bonn, the perception of the need for improved relations with the United Kingdom is probably sharpest at the top.

7. If you agree with this analysis, the next step might be for you to discuss the matter with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. If you and he were in general agreement, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and we would develop proposals for specific developments, and for the ways in which they could be presented in Paris and Bonn, which you and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary could then consider. I do not want at this stage to pre-empt that stage, but the sort of ideas we could consider might include :

- (a) more frequent bilateral summits with the President of the Republic - twice a year, or perhaps three times every two years; this could be combined with:

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- (b) every other bilateral summit might be on the present lines, bringing not only Heads of Government but also a larger group of Ministers together; the other summits could be for Heads of Government and Foreign Ministers only;
 - (c) more frequent consultations ad hoc at Ministerial level (like, for instance, those which the Chancellor of the Exchequer or the Minister of Agriculture have with their counterparts), including the possibility of further meetings between you and Monsieur Barre;
 - (d) development of links between Political Directors, both bilaterally and tripartitely;
 - (e) more direct discussions between officials in home departments and their French and German counterparts (but these would have to be kept under review by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and (on Community matters) the European Secretariat of the Cabinet Office, to ensure a coherence of national policies and activities).
8. I have not sent a copy of this note to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary; but, if you are minded to discuss these matters with him, it could form a basis for discussion.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

21st October, 1980

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Action Overleaf 37

C.C. *H. Franklin*
Mr. Hale-Guy
354/11

CABINET OFFICE
Ref. A03306
A
MR. ALEXANDER
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

The attached minute to the Prime Minister on our relationships with France and with Germany explains itself.

2. It reverts to a subject which I raised with the Prime Minister in my minute of 14th August (A02895). What is said in that minute still holds good, and I should be happy for you to draw the Prime Minister's attention to it again; but I have not referred to it explicitly because it was not copied to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, and I have suggested that the latest minute could be copied to him.

FOLD 3/ PT1

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

21st October, 1980

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*with
no appended*