



Sir Antony Acland KCMG KCVO
Permanent Under-Secretary of State

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London SW1A 2AH

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Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO
CABINET OFFICE

AO 17/2

p.a.

My dear Robert,

VISIT OF PRESIDENT MITTERRAND

You copied to me your minute of 8 February to John Coles. You may have seen the subsequent exchange of telegrams with Paris on 14 February.

There are a number of points which it is important to clear up with Jacques Attali, not least how we tell Francis Gutmann that we wish to postpone the visit he was to have made on 5 March. I have, therefore, drawn together the following points which you may like to put to Attali when you see him at the weekend:

- (a) Attali should by now have told de Margerie of the President's visit. Can we speak to him yet about arrangements?
- (b) Can Sir John Fretwell now inform Gutmann of the postponement of his talks with me? The sooner that we can do this the better.
- (c) We would like to make the press announcement of the President's visit on Friday, 2 March at 1100 on the following lines:

"At the invitation of the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher FRS MP, the President of the French Republic, Monsieur François Mitterrand, will be visiting the UK for talks and lunch at Chequers on Monday 5 March".

Notes for Editors would draw attention to their last meeting in Paris and describe the talks as being part of the preparation for the Brussels European Council.



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- (d) We are already being asked if President Mitterrand is coming to London as part of his tour of Community capitals. While we can say that the President and the Prime Minister have already had a bilateral discussion of Community matters at Marly le Roi, it would nonetheless be helpful if we could indicate to trusted European Community contacts that another meeting before the European Council is possible. Is there the same requirement for secrecy this time?
- (e) The talks should concentrate on European Community topics, but we would expect the Prime Minister to wish to touch also on developments following the death of Andropov and, perhaps not at such length as last time, developments in the Middle East.

I imagine that you and Attali will wish to make firm plans for your own preparatory meeting and decide who will be there.

You may like to know that the French have still not decided on dates for the next bilateral Summit. We have told the Elysée that the Prime Minister's preference is for 29-30 November. If there is a convenient moment it would be helpful if you could remind Attali of this, while making clear that the arrangements are being pursued through John Fretwell.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Coles at No 10.

Yours ever
Antony

Antony Acland

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