

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

CONTACTS WITH FRANCE AND GERMANY ON EC ISSUES

Before I received your minute of 26 October, the Prime Minister had indicated to me that she wished to appoint Mr. Williamson as her representative to carry forward discussions with the French and the Germans prior to the European Council at Athens. I have ascertained that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer are content with this.

It will be for consideration whether the Prime Minister should send a message to President Mitterrand and perhaps Chancellor Kohl about this matter - or whether we should adopt some alternative procedure. My own feeling, subject to any views which you or other recipients of this minute may have, is that the important thing now is to move quickly.

I am copying this minute to Mr. Fall (FCO) and to Mr. Kerr (HM Treasury).

E. J. COLES

27 October 1983

Cabinet office
discussed
with ASX
- no message
to be sent
3/11/83

de JK
BA



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Ref. A083/3042

MR COLES

I have been discussing with Mr Williamson how to handle our private contacts with the President's office in France and the Chancellor's office in Germany on the Community issues that will arise at the European Council at Athens in December.

2. I understand that you agreed with President Mitterand that there should be private contacts of this kind between his representative and your representative. I provisionally agreed with Monsieur Attali, when he was here last week, that, when he comes over for the meeting of Personal Representatives on 5 and 6 November, his colleague Monsieur Morel of the Elysee would come over at the same time for discussions with Mr Williamson. Monsieur Morel and Mr Williamson would then report the outcome of their discussions to Monsieur Attali and me before Monsieur Attali and Monsieur Morel returned to Paris on 6 November. This could set a line for future contacts with the French, if the Prime Minister is content.

3. I believe that it was also agreed between the President and the Prime Minister that there should be contacts of a similar nature with the Chancellor's representative in Germany. We do not at present have a ready made contact for this purpose. What I do propose to do, therefore, is to send a message to the State Secretary in the Federal Chancellery, Dr Waldemar Schreckenger, with whom I discussed these matters during his visit to London earlier this month, proposing that there should be discreet contacts between the Prime Minister's representative and the Federal Chancellor's representative in the period leading up to the Athens Council, and inviting him to nominate somebody in the Federal Chancellor's office for this purpose. Mr Williamson would then make contact with the person so nominated.



4. I should be grateful to know if this way of proceeding is consistent with what the Prime Minister agreed with President Mitterand. If so, we will proceed accordingly.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RA' with a stylized flourish.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

26 October 1983

conqueror