



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

New Ark,

4 July 1989

PRIME MINISTER'S INTERVIEW WITH LE MONDE

The Prime Minister has agreed to give an interview to Le Monde in advance of the Economic Summit. This will take place on Tuesday 11 July.

We have now received the following subject areas:

1) Europe. What is the PM's vision for Europe? Does she regard it only as a market or free trade area? Any comment on the Euro-election results? Do they mean that a majority of the British public disagree with the government on Europe? What is the British attitude to an inter-governmental conference? When does the Prime Minister think conditions will be right for Britain to join the ERM? Prime Minister's relations with Mitterrand and Delors? British views on the Franco-German axis?

2) Economy. What has caused inflation to climb to 8.3%? What is Sir A Walter's role in economic policy making?

3) International Affairs.

- Can Communism survive? How does Britain see the Gorbachev reforms evolving?

- Is the PM bitter about the SNF issue and the NATO Summit? Does Britain have any plans to change the level of the British Army on the Rhine?

- How can Britain solve the China/Hong Kong problem? How much flexibility can we offer on right of abode to UK passport-holders in Hong Kong?

2.

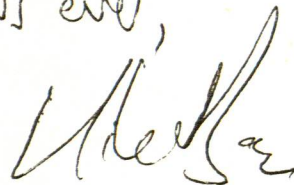
- Any expectations of Sr Menem's election in Argentina?

- Is the special relationship with the US still the same under President Bush?

I should be grateful for briefing on the above subjects (except for the section on the economy), to reach us please by close of play on Friday.

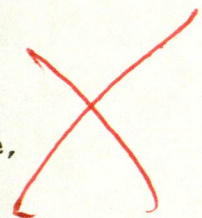
The Prime Minister is also giving an interview at the same time to Christine Ockrent of Antenne 2. The Embassy in Paris hopes to let us have subject areas by tomorrow. I shall be in touch again as soon as they are received.

Yours ever,



MICHAEL BATES
Press Office

Mr Bob Pierce,
Private Office,
FCO.



Neil Hamer
Private Office, FCO.
tube

Mike

~~Wed.~~ 11 Jul 9. 30 - 11. 00
Tues

You are looking after them two.
Pat has said she will do the Honde
& the Club de la Paene "if time can
be found."

If it is possible to find time for
only one interview we agree that
this should go to the Honde.

Christie Ochrent? MW
22/5

~~Kate & Andy
Rogers~~



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

6 February 1989

Dear Dominique,

Please refer to our conversations regarding your request on behalf of Le Monde for an interview with the Prime Minister.

As I explained, Mrs Thatcher has a very full programme for some time ahead and is unable to offer you an opportunity at present. However we are trying to see if we can identify a time much later in the year. I shall keep you informed on progress.

Yours sincerely,

MICHAEL BATES
Press Office

M Dominique Dhombres,
Le Monde.

Tony
We spoke. Can we please resubmit this request to May meeting? It would be very appropriate to do it in early July - in advance of the Paris summit & at the start of the French Presidency (i.e. After Madrid).
Mike 9/5



BRITISH EMBASSY

35, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré - 75383 Paris Cedex 08

Telephone : 42 66 91 42

M Bates Esq
Press Office
N°10 Downing Street
London

Your reference

Our reference

Date

9 May 1989

Dear Mike,

FRENCH MEDIA REQUESTS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER

1. In your letter of 16 February you told me that while the Prime Minister was unable to accede to any demands from the French media for the time being, you would reconsider any such requests in the period leading up to the Economic Summit. There has certainly been no shortage of such requests, prompted in many cases by the 10th anniversary, but on the basis of your letter I have resisted them and in most cases the media have found no difficulty in producing major pieces on the Prime Minister, the UK and the British Government nonetheless. Recent coverage has indeed been massive and there is no particular need to remind the French people that we exist. The need for certain specific types of publicity does however remain for the following reasons:

(a) Many of the issues which the French have set themselves as priorities for their Presidency beginning on 1 July are likely to bring them into conflict with the UK. Obvious examples are the Social dimension and the Delors Report. The more we can get our views on these topics through to French public opinion, the harder it will be for the French Government to pretend that our views are in some way unworthy of consideration or misconceived.

(b) After a period during which Britain's economic performance provoked almost unstinting praise from French commentators, recent economic indicators have been widely picked up here as evidence of doubt whether the turn around in Britain's economic performance can continue and on how deep it actually goes. For the Prime Minister to set out in forthright terms her confidence in Britain's economic performance would have a salutary effect.

(c) The French hope the Bicentenary celebrations and the Economic Summit will put France at the centre of world attention during the period around 14 July. The Government from President Mitterrand down will be almost painfully anxious that these events should be a success and they will expect, and be grateful for, signs that countries particularly close to them recognise their significance.

.../2. There is



-2-

2. There is no difficulty in obtaining media exposure for the Prime Minister: the problem is to get the most effective exposure taking into account the considerations I have just set out. The following suggestions are therefore selected with that purpose in mind. The Ambassador strongly supports them:

(a) "Le Club de la Presse". Every Sunday evening an extended interview is broadcast on one of France's major radio networks, Europe 1. This interview is carried out by one of France's most distinguished and influential journalists, Jean-Pierre Elkabbach, supported by one or more of his colleagues. The broadcast is almost always widely picked up in the press, on national television and in subsequent radio broadcasts so its impact is much greater than that of the original programme. Elkabbach has told us it is rare for foreign personalities to appear on this programme and the Prime Minister is the only European leader he would consider inviting. However, he has been encouraged to put this request by memories of the occasion in 1980 when the Prime Minister agreed to appear on a television programme called "Cards on the Table" which he was at that time in charge of.

In the event of the Prime Minister agreeing in principle to this request he and one of his colleagues, probably an equally distinguished political commentator called Alain Duhamel, would fly across to London to record the programme, with a view to broadcasting it on, they hope, either 25 June or 9 July. He says the programme could be recorded any time from Friday afternoon through to Sunday morning, the only restraint being that he has to be able to return to Paris with the material in time for the actual broadcast. The two days suggested both have their advantages. The first would naturally lead to emphasis on the Madrid European Council and European Community issues, while the second would be closer to the Economic Summit. We think the first would be marginally better in allowing Mrs Thatcher to develop her case on European Community issues with less distraction from other issues which, though important, are at present less essential to how Britain and France are going to get on together during the French Presidency.

(b) If you refer to my letter of 20 January you will see that we were attracted by the possibility of an interview with France's influential business fortnightly L'Expansion. We remain attracted by this, and L'Expansion have told us that they too hope that their request can be reconsidered. The reasons set out in my earlier letter remain valid and are now strengthened by the considerations in (b) above.

... (c) The final



-3-

(c) The final requirement, how to give the right sort of acknowledgement to the Bicentenary celebrations, could be met by a request we have received from France's most important television channel, TF1. TF1 have had the ingenious idea of putting out between 1 and 14 July a series of 3-minute messages on the French revolution by the Heads of State or Government from those countries which already existed in 1789 and were affected by the events of that time. The intention is to precede these messages with an extract from the report of the events on 1789 made to his government by the Ambassador of the day. Countries being approached include the USA, the USSR, Poland, Germany, the Vatican, Austria, Sweden, Spain, China and Japan. As far as I can gather the Chinese the Russians the Austrians and the Spaniards have already agreed to participate and the Americans and Germans think they are likely to do so too. Certainly the programme would seem to provide a friendly and painless way of reminding the French of our credentials as an ancient European nation state and of our common historical experiences while making a nod in the direction of those aspects of the Revolution which deserve it.

3. There may well be other requests put to us in due course and, as I said, the above list is far from exclusive. Most of the requests described in my earlier letter are still valid but the three set out above seem to us to provide the best balance and most effective mix. I should be grateful to learn your response.

*Yours ever,
Dick*

R D Wilkinson

cc D G Blunt Esq
WED, FCO



BRITISH EMBASSY

35, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré - 75383 Paris Cedex 08

Telephone : 42 66 91 42

BY FAX

Michael Bates Esq
Press Office
10 Downing Street

Your reference

Our reference

Date

*Le Monde -
N. S. Chambres*

22 May 1989

*Jacques Amatri
(for Ed)*

Dear Mike,

FRENCH MEDIA INTERVIEWS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER

1. I was glad to learn that the Prime Minister has agreed in principle, and subject to satisfactory arrangements being possible, to grant an interview to Le Monde and to appear on "Le Club de la Presse". We have however just received a request which I think would suit our purposes even better than the appearance on "Le Club de la Presse" and I wish to propose that it might be substituted for it.

2. As I believe you are aware, Mme Christine Ockrent is probably the best-known of all French television news broadcasters. Her 8 p.m. news programme on the public channel Antenne 2, while it is probably watched by a numerically smaller number than the simultaneous news programme on TF1, is at least as influential. Any significant item on it is picked up by the press and other media. Mme Ockrent phrases her request as follows:

"At a time when there are apparently some misunderstandings between Great Britain and France on various issues, it seems to me important that the British viewpoint be expressed at the highest level and exposed to French public opinion in a television programme with a wide impact such as our evening news."

The interview which should take place before the next European Summit on June 26 would focus on European affairs and on British and French problems. It could be taped in London at the date and time of your convenience preferably around June 15."

3. Mme Ockrent tells us the broadcast time of the interview would probably be about 10-15 minutes. Although it would obviously cover less ground than "Le Club de la Presse" and last less long, it would have at least as much impact, if not more, and would of course be easier to set up. I am sorry to have to ask you to go back to the Prime Minister with this request, but I hope you will agree that it seems a worthwhile opportunity which it would be a pity to miss.

*Yours an,
Dick*

cc D G Blunt Esq LVO
WED, FCO
J Grant Esq
News Department FCO

R D Wilkinson



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Yours am,
Dick

cc D G Blunt Esq LVO
WED, FCO
J Grant Esq
News Department, FCO

R D Wilkinson



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

16 February 1989

Dear Sir,

FRENCH MEDIA REQUESTS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER

I am sorry that you have had to wait for a reply to your letter of 20 January but, as I told you on the telephone, it has taken a while for the various bids to work through for the Prime Minister's consideration.

We note the French media's case for rather more special treatment in this French Bicentennial year. We shall do our best to recognise this but I must warn you that the Prime Minister's diary commitments are as heavy as ever. In fact, we have nothing firm to offer you at present.

Because of the pressure on the diary, we have taken you at your word and not even considered the bids covered in your paragraph five. They may all be safely declined.

As for L'Express, it really is much too soon for them to have another shot. They will have to wait for a reasonable period before they can again be favourably considered. Incidentally, the Prime Minister is refusing all requests for interviews in connection with her tenth anniversary in office, if that is any consolation to them.

The Prime Minister has considered L'Expansion and reconsidered Le Monde. In both cases, however, she has decided to defer a decision for the moment and will reconsider nearer the Economic Summit. She may also think about Le Figaro at the same time.

/Finally

- 2 -

Finally, I am afraid that the HEC idea is also a non-starter. Charles Powell has suggested that it might be something the Foreign Secretary instead could perhaps consider?

*Yours ever,
Michael*

MICHAEL BATES
Press Office

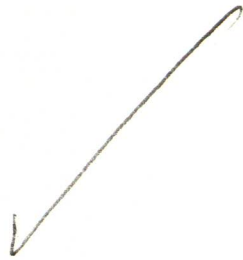
Mr R D Wilkinson,
British Embassy, Paris.
(copy to Mr D Blunt, WED).

1. Bernard.

2. Charles.

3. Terry.

I think we had put 102 PM in context of Jimmy



FRENCH MEDIA REQUESTS

Please see Paris letter of 20 January attached.

① Le Monde: Is it worth now pencilling in a date to coincide with, for example, the Economic Summit?

② L'Expansion: A reasonable case, if it is not overegging the French pudding. Worth putting to a diary meeting?

Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales: Grateful for advice.

Mick

There went to PM on Monday 13/2/89
Her reply was "let's hold these
bits & consider them now the
Economic Summit. Will you
respond saying that their
be further considered by the PM at
a later date."

Mick 302

DM
13/2/89



BRITISH EMBASSY

35, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré - 75383 Paris Cedex 08

Telephone : 42 66 91 42

M Bates Esq
Press Office
N°10 Downing St

Your reference

Our reference

Date

20 January 1989

Dear Michael,

FRENCH MEDIA REQUESTS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER

1. When I called on you in early December you told me that it had been agreed that the Prime Minister should grant an interview to Le Monde. I should be grateful for your confirmation of this decision. Meanwhile, although I know that there has been a tradition whereby the Prime Minister only gives one interview a year with the French media I should like at least to inform you of various requests we have received for interviews in recent weeks and to ask in some cases for your serious consideration of them. I think it only fair to ask for slightly more favourable treatment than usual for the French media in the Bicentennial year and in view of the forthcoming Economic summit in Paris and French Presidency of the EC, all of which events will serve to focus international attention on France. The imminent 10th anniversary of the Prime Minister's occupation of Downing Street is behind many of the requests for interviews.

2. What seems to us the most attractive request comes from the fortnightly magazine L'Expansion. This magazine is widely read in senior business, financial and political circles and is considered influential. Moreover we have been told that not only would the interview be serious and in depth but would be conducted by Jean Boissonnat, widely recognised as one of the best economic journalists in France. As it happens we are trying in any case to lure Boissonnat to the UK for a Category I visit and for him to be able to interview the Prime Minister in the course of that visit, perhaps in the period leading up to the Economic Summit, would ensure substantial and probably sympathetic coverage for British views. I should be grateful if this request could be given serious consideration.

3. Another request that deserves serious consideration comes from Le Figaro. They have approached me about the possibility of an interview, pointing out that they are the largest selling serious Parisian daily, and arguing that such an interview would give us a chance to correct the paradox whereby the French right tend to be more suspicious of the UK than the French left.

.../There is force

agreed in principle for later in the year.

Vincent Gerard was turned down earlier this month.



-2-

There is force in this argument and I would suggest that Le Figaro might naturally be the next candidate after Le Monde among the daily press for an interview with the Prime Minister but I have warned them that they might have to wait a year or so.

4. You will remember that last year Jérôme Dumoulin and Elie Marcuse of L'Express conducted an excellent interview with the Prime Minister (Pat Roberts's letter of 29 January). Marcuse has now asked if they can have a second interview timed to coincide with the tenth anniversary, and this time he promises that the cover of the National as well as the International edition would carry the Prime Minister's photograph. L'Express is the most important of the French political weeklies, but I suspect it would be hard to justify a second interview so soon after the last.

5. As an indication of current French interest in the Prime Minister, you should be aware of the following requests, though we would not urge that you respond favourably to them.

a) We have received 3 requests from popular widely selling magazines whose interest is chiefly in the human aspect of the Prime Minister and her achievements : concern for the family, the work ethic, thrift, etc. These three magazines - Valeurs Actuelles, Madame Figaro and Figaro Magazine are all basically right-wing publications not much read in the homes of Parisian decision makers but with a certain impact among the middle classes. All 3 are worthy publications. We could be virtually certain that any interview with them would result in prominent, serious and favourable coverage. But it is probably fair to say that the Prime Minister's reputation in those circles is already pretty high and so the contribution made to our objectives in France by such an interview might not be very great.

b) 24 provincial daily newspapers, with a total print run of 1.5 million and a estimated 5 million readership, came together a year or so ago to form "Le Club des Régions". This Club organises interviews with prominent political personalities (Mitterrand, Chirac and Barre have all been interviewed) and the results are published in all the subscribing newspapers. The group have asked for an interview with the Prime Minister. There are attractions in occasionally lifting ones eyes outside Paris and trying to reach "la France profonde". However, although their accumulated circulation is not unimpressive, the 24 newspapers in question do not include the most important provincial newspapers, and presumably we should turn this down.

c) France's most popular television channel, the privatised TF1, is planning a "European evening" to coincide with the publication of the results of the European elections. They are considering commissioning a special opinion poll into Europe-wide attitudes to the Community and they propose a link up

.../whereby President

Too true
he only had
one on
22/1/88



-3-

whereby President Mitterrand and the Prime Minister would comment on the results of this poll. We see little attraction in this. The poll is likely once again to make Britain appear lukewarm towards the Community compared with the peoples of other member States and the language problem would give Mitterrand too great an advantage over any non-French participant. Again, I assume we should send a polite refusal.

6. Finally, I come to a rather different proposition. France's oldest and most distinguished business school, one of its famous "grandes écoles" is the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales, or HEC for short. They have an association of former students, founded in 1883, with 8,500 members, 1,500 who work abroad. They organise regular meetings to which they invite distinguished visitors. These meetings usually take place over breakfast first thing in the morning so as not to interfere with the working day of their generally busy members. They have approached us with the suggestions that one of these meetings might exceptionally be held in London and the Prime Minister asked to address it. They are sure that a substantial number of their members would fly over for such an event. The Ambassador in his telegram N°83 of 18 January has already said that he would welcome it if the Prime Minister were able to make a major speech in France this year. A meeting along the lines proposed by HEC would attract almost as much attention in France as would a speech on French soil and would be delivered to a group of generally influential people. I should be grateful to know if this idea has any appeal.

7. Sorry to inflict on you such a long letter but requests have been coming thick and fast. Perhaps the best thing would be if I give you a few days to absorb this letter and then give you a ring to discuss it.

Your ever,

Dick

R D Wilkinson

cc D G Blunt Esq
WED, FCO

Terry

Le Monde has asked for an
interview with PM prior to the Rhodes
European Council (2-3 December).

It is the most important ^{and influential} serious French
Daily newspaper, which has latterly showed
some sympathy for the PM's approach to European
matters.

Mike

~~Mike~~ ^{AD advised}
Phil 21/11

PM has said "a long time ahead."
Perhaps you could tell them not now
because of being full for many months
ahead but we will keep respect
our list.

DP
23/11/88