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Prime Minister

Ref. A083/1630

cc. FRANCE: Anglo/French relations Pt 2.

MR COLES

I am minuting you separately about the outcome of my discussions with Monsieur Attali yesterday on the European budget. This note records two other matters which came up during the course of the discussion.

2. Monsieur Attali was at some pains to stress the extent of "political unity" between the President and the Prime Minister (and indeed the Federal Chancellor); he said that they had a common view of many things. He stressed the President's respect for the Prime Minister and his desire to have a good relationship with her. He reverted to the suggestion that, as there had not been a chance for a bilateral meeting between the President and the Prime Minister at Williamsburg, they should meet informally in the next few weeks, and in any case before the next formal bilateral Summit meeting. He said that he was sure that the President would very much welcome it, if the Prime Minister felt able to go across to Paris for lunch or dinner between now and the end of July, or indeed in August: he would not be going out of France. Monsieur Attali indicated that he would not exclude the possibility that the President would accept an invitation to come to London or Chequers for a meal. We agreed that the President and the Prime Minister would be seeing each other at Stuttgart and the possibility could be pursued there.

3. On the Williamsburg Summit, Monsieur Attali referred to the doubts which the President had expressed in his television broadcast the previous evening. He said that what the President had said reflected the President's own views, not any kind of briefing. Some of the French press had interpreted what the President had said as indicating some uncertainty whether he would agree to attend another Summit in 1984. That was wrong: the President would of course accept an invitation to attend the Economic Summit in the United Kingdom next year. But the fact remained that, though the President valued the opportunity of talking with his colleagues, the occasions presented him with some difficulty: he was the only man of the left at the table, and (so long as that was the case) could not expect to get a



great deal out of the meetings. The President would hope that we should be able to scale down next year's Summit. In particular, he would like to reduce the public relations element in it. For him the ideal arrangement would be that a communique should be issued from 10 Downing Street simply saying that the Summit had been held a week earlier. Secondly, the President would hope that we would carry further the development already begun at Williamsburg of increasing the number of meetings of Heads of State or Government on their own. So far as he was concerned, the ideal arrangement would be that the whole meeting should be of Heads of State or Government only, though Monsieur Attali and I agreed that that would probably be impossible for Germany, because of the coalition problem, and perhaps for some of the other countries as well.

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ROBERT ARMSTRONG

10 June 1983

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SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

YOUR TALKS WITH M. ATTALI

The Prime Minister has noted the contents of your minute of 10 June.

Mrs. Thatcher has made no comment on the suggestion that there should be an informal meeting between President Mitterrand and herself in the next few weeks.

A. J. COLES

14 June 1983

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