

Ref. A084/182

MR COLES

When I saw Monsieur Attali yesterday, he said that his President would wish to have a brief word with the Prime Minister about the Economic Summit 1984.

2. Before each of the Summits which President Mitterrand had attended, at Ottawa, Versailles and Williamsburg, it had been agreed among the participants that over-optimistic expectations should not be created about the outcome. In each case it had not been possible to realise that agreement in the event. Enormous numbers of journalists had come to the meetings, particularly at Williamsburg, and this had generated the need to satisfy the media's appetite for news. The President would want very much to avoid a repetition of that situation in London, and would be wishing to stress this when he met the Prime Minister.

3. Monsieur Attali did not say so, but I dare say that President Mitterrand has in mind the pressures put upon him at Williamsburg to subscribe to the political declaration which was agreed before the Prime Minister left. He made it pretty clear at the time that he would have preferred that there should be no such declaration, and only agreed to it because in the situation as it developed failure to do so would have created a very negative and divided impression. That situation, in President Mitterrand's view, occurred because expectations had been aroused by the Americans.

4. I said to Monsieur Attali that it was not part of our preparations to arouse excessive expectations about the outcome of the Summit. The Prime Minister wanted it to be an informal and workman-like occasion for good discussion among colleagues, and I had no doubt that she would be seeking to defuse excessive expectations of the outcome.

5. I am sending a copy of this minute to Mr Fall.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

18 January 1984