



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

28 November, 1984

*Dear Charles,*

Prime Minister's Visit to France: Possible Meeting with  
French Farmers Union President

The President of the main French Farmers' Union, Monsieur Françoise Guillaume, has written to our Ambassador in Paris to request a meeting with the Prime Minister during her visit to France later this week. Although no precise subject matter is stated, we understand Monsieur Guillaume wishes to discuss the future of the CAP.

The request should be seen against the possibility of farmers demonstrating in and around Avignon during the Prime Minister's visit for the Franco-British Council Conference (though Guillaume's letter makes no reference to this possibility). We first heard of the likelihood of such demonstrations via Monsieur Chirac, who approached Sir John Fretwell at the end of last week. A member of the French Agriculture Minister's Cabinet has now told us that two national farmers unions intend to organise demonstrations to coincide with the Avignon meeting. They will have two purposes: first, to denounce the budgetary constraints placed on the CAP, and second, to demonstrate continuing hostility to EC enlargement. The first grievance will be directed particularly against the British; the second is geared to the presence in Avignon of Monsieur Fabius. We have been told that the demonstrations may be on a large scale.

According to Monsieur Chirac, Monsieur Guillaume's intention is that the meeting with the Prime Minister should permit him to say that he had conveyed the farmers' worries personally to her and thereby defuse the threat of demonstrations at Avignon. But, despite the risk that the demonstrations will go ahead in the absence of a meeting, we agree with Sir John Fretwell's advice that the Prime Minister should not agree to meet Monsieur Guillaume on this visit.

M. Guillaume has already achieved access to Community Ministers, under threat of demonstrations, at the time of the Agriculture Ministers meeting in Angers in May. For him to obtain a meeting by similar means with the

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British Prime Minister would elevate his standing to an unreasonable degree and would be unwelcome to the French government. The role played by M. Chirac as an intermediary would risk involving the Prime Minister in French political controversy if it became known. There would almost certainly be adverse reactions among farmers here and pressure for the relatively infrequent meetings between the Prime Minister and the President of the NFU to be put on a more formal and regular basis. Moreover, it is not clear that a meeting with Guillaume would significantly alter the scale or the nature of the intended demonstrations. Security in Avignon, which it is of course the responsibility of the French government to assure, will in any case be tight.

If the Prime Minister agrees, Sir John Fretwell will tell M. Guillaume that there is no gap in her programme for a meeting. He will however offer to bring forward a meeting he had himself been planning to hold with Guillaume.

I am copying this letter to Ivor Llewellyn (MAFF).

*Yours ever,*

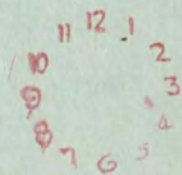
*Colin Budd*

(C R Budd)  
Private Secretary

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10 Downing Street

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28 NOV 1984





10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

28 November 1984

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO FRANCE:  
POSSIBLE MEETING WITH FRENCH  
FARMER'S UNION PRESIDENT

Thank you for your letter of 28 November about a possible meeting with M. Guillaume.

The Prime Minister does not think that such a meeting would be appropriate.

I am copying this letter to Ivor Llewelyn (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food).

(Charles Powell)

C R Budd Esq  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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FM PARIS 261845Z NOV 84  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1315 OF 26 NOVEMBER

MY TELNO 1303: FRANCO-BRITISH COUNCIL, AVIGNON: POSSIBLE FARMERS' DEMONSTRATION

## SUMMARY

1. WRITTEN REQUEST NOW RECEIVED FROM FRANCOIS GUILLAUME FOR A MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER DURING HER FORTHCOMING VISIT TO FRANCE. LIKELIHOOD OF FARMERS' DEMONSTRATIONS IN AVIGNON CONFIRMED BY MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE. <sup>PI</sup>DESTE THIS, I RECOMMEND AGAINST THE PRIME MINISTER MEETING GUILLAUME IN VIEW OF THE WIDER CONSIDERATIONS.

## DETAIL

2. I RECEIVED TODAY A FORMAL REQUEST IN WRITING FROM FRANCOIS GUILLAUME, PRESIDENT OF THE MAIN FRENCH FARMERS' UNION, SEEKING A MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER DURING HER VISIT TO FRANCE LATER THIS WEEK. ALTHOUGH NO PRECISE SUBJECT MATTER IS STATED IN GUILLAUME'S LETTER, THE INTENTION APPEARS TO BE TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF THE CAP. (GUILLAUME HAS EXPRESSED HIMSELF STRONGLY AGAINST THE RECENT AGREEMENT ON BUDGET DISCIPLINE, REGARDING IT AS AN ATTEMPT INSPIRED BY UK TO DESTROY THE CAP).

3. AS REPORTED IN MY TUR, GUILLAUME'S REQUEST MUST BE JUDGED AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF FARMERS' DEMONSTRATIONS IN AND AROUND AVIGNON DURING THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT, THOUGH HIS LETTER MAKES NO REFERENCE TO THIS POSSIBILITY. CHEVAUCHEZ (ROCARD'S CABINET) HAS TOLD US THAT TWO NATIONAL FARMERS' UNIONS (THE FNSEA AND THE CNJA) INTEND ORGANISING DEMONSTRATIONS IN AVIGNON TO COINCIDE WITH THE FRANCO-BRITISH COUNCIL MEETING. THEY WILL HAVE TWO PURPOSES: FIRST TO DENOUNCE THE BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS PLACED ON THE CAP, AND SECOND, TO DEMONSTRATE CONTINUING HOSTILITY TO EC ENLARGEMENT. THE FIRST GRIEVANCE WILL BE DIRECTED PARTICULARLY AGAINST THE BRITISH, THE SECOND IS GEARED TO THE PRESENCE IN AVIGNON OF FABIUS. CHEVAUCHEZ TOLD US THAT THE DEMONSTRATION, BEING NATIONALLY ORGANISED, MIGHT ATTRACT LARGE NUMBERS. BUT SECURITY ON THE GROUND WOULD BE VERY TIGHT.

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4. DESPITE THE RISK OF DEMONSTRATIONS, I BELIEVE THAT ON BALANCE THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD NOT AGREE TO MEET GUILLAUME ON THIS VISIT. THE PRINCIPLE OF GUILLAUME HAVING DIRECT ACCESS TO COMMUNITY MINISTERS WAS CONCEDED BY ROCARD, UNDER THREAT OF DEMONSTRATIONS, AT THE TIME OF THE AGRICULTURE MINISTERS' MEETING IN ANGERS IN MAY. FOR GUILLAUME TO OBTAIN BY SIMILAR MEANS THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER WOULD ELEVATE HIS STANDING TO AN UNREASONABLE DEGREE AND BE UNWELCOME TO THE GOVERNMENT HERE, IN PARTICULAR TO ROCARD WHOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH GUILLAUME IS OFTEN DIFFICULT. THE ROLE PLAYED BY CHIRAC AS AN INTERMEDIARY WOULD RISK INVOLVING THE PRIME MINISTER IN FRENCH POLITICAL CONTROVERSY IF IT BECAME KNOWN. MOREOVER IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT A MEETING WITH GUILLAUME WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY ALTER THE SCALE OR THE NATURE OF THE INTENDED DEMONSTRATIONS.

5. I WAS ALREADY IN THE PROCESS OF ARRANGING TO MEET GUILLAUME AT HIS REQUEST EARLY NEXT YEAR. IF THE PRIME MINISTER AGREES THAT IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR HER TO SEE HIM DURING HER VISIT THIS WEEK, I SHALL SAY THAT THERE IS NO GAP IN HER PROGRAMME BUT OFFER TO FIRM UP ARRANGEMENTS FOR MY OWN MEETING WITH HIM AND TO BRING IT FORWARD IF THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL.

FRETWELL

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PROTOCOL D  
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PS/LADY YOUNG  
PS/MR RENTON  
MR DEREK THOMAS  
MR JENKINS  
MR RENWICK

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