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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

cdp
16/12/85



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

13 December 1985

Dear Colin

Thank you for your letter of 5 December. The Home Secretary's diary for January is already difficult and he had decided therefore not to pursue the idea of a visit to Paris then. A copy of this letter goes to Charles Powell at No. 10.

Yours sincerely
William Pitt

W R FITTALL

C R Budd Esq

FRANCE

VISITS OF
PRES. MITCHELL
P 55

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

5 December 1985

CDP
57/11

Dear William,

Possible Visit to Paris by Mr Hurd

Thank you for your letter of 19 November and for the enclosed note of the Home Secretary's discussion with M. Joxe at the Anglo-French Summit.

We are glad that Mr Hurd considers that further discussions with his French counterpart would be useful and in principle welcome the idea of a visit to Paris. Given the approach of the National Assembly elections, our Paris Embassy's advice, which we endorse, is that any visit to Paris during the life of the present French Government should take place as early as possible in the New Year; and that the six-week period before the elections (1 February-16 March) should be avoided.

You may wish to draw Mr Hurd's attention to the growing controversy surrounding M. Joxe's personality and present policies. I attach a copy of a letter from our Paris Embassy giving further details. Whilst these points need not, in our view, deter Mr Hurd from going ahead with a working visit, we suggest that any attempt by the French to turn it into a high-profile occasion should be resisted.

Please let us know if you require further assistance or advice. If Home Office officials are in direct contact with our Paris Embassy about the visit, we should be grateful to be kept in the picture as arrangements develop.

I am copying this letter to Charles Powell at No 10.

Yours Sincerely
Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

W R Fittall Esq
PS/Secretary of State
Home Office
Queen Anne's Gate
LONDON SW1



BRITISH EMBASSY

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R S G Clarke Esq
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FCO

Your reference

Our reference

Date 27 November 1985

Dear Roger,

POSSIBLE VISIT BY THE HOME SECRETARY TO PARIS

1. Thank you for your letter of 20 November which enclosed the record of the discussion on counter-terrorism between the Home Secretary and M. Joxe on 18 November. We read it with much interest.
2. As seen from here, there are certainly no objections to a visit by the Home Secretary to Paris, in response to M. Joxe's invitation. But I ought perhaps to add a word or two on the growing controversy surrounding M. Joxe's personality and present policies (a point which the Ambassador mentioned to Mr Hurd on 18 November). In the aftermath of the Greenpeace affair, scarcely a day goes by without some newspaper (normally right-wing) surfacing a new theory that Joxe's real intention during his tenure of office as Minister of the Interior has been, and still is, to destabilise the efficiency of certain areas of the French security and intelligence services. Even this week's Le Point (moderate right wing weekly) has a paragraph on Joxe's apparent determination to change the system whereby officers who join the French Security Service (DST) remain within that service for their professional life. Joxe apparently wants to see more comings and goings; the deleterious effects of this latter system are well known to all those who are acquainted with the other French security agencies, notably the Renseignements Généraux and the DGSE. I have not yet heard authoritatively whether a plan by Joxe to alter the DST is really to be put into effect: but the rumours seem certain to continue. Ad you will no doubt recall the long history of rumour and innuendo attaching to the Joxe family, their days spent in Moscow and the oft-proclaimed Marxist affiliations of both Pierre and Alain Joxe.
3. All of which merely to say that Joxe may prove to be a Minister under fire during the last four months of his present tenure of office. Given that the Home Secretary is likely to want to do continuing business with Joxe's successor, whoever he may be, we should therefore not take it too tragically if

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no visit were able to be arranged before March. That said, there are a number of other topics (apart from those mentioned in the record of meeting of 18 November) which could form the basis of a useful and interesting discussion between the Home Secretary and M. Joxe. I am thinking of the re-equipment of police forces, increased automation of crime records, vastly increased expenditure on law and order here in a period of budgetary rigour, and other topics which have been a notable feature of Joxe's fifteen months tenure of office. Indeed, even his worst detractors admit a degree of grudging admiration for the effective way in which M. Joxe has defended the material interests of the Ministry of the Interior and embarked upon an ambitious programme of modernisation (see copy of a recent minute attached below, by the Head of Chancery). As for our cooperation with the French agencies on counter terrorism, I think it is fair to say that this continues to flourish on the bilateral and trilateral fronts (alluded to in point 4(c) of the record); and that there is no obvious scope for further political initiatives to develop it.

4. Having advised the Home Office in the light of the above, no doubt you will let us know if you wish the Embassy to pursue with M. Joxe's cabinet the question of possible dates. If so, the earlier before the elections, the better: The Ambassador's view, in summary, is that a visit would be useful in January but that we should avoid the six weeks before the elections (1 February to 16 March) when Joxe in any event is likely to be on the campaign trail.

Yours ever,

Mike

M J Reynolds

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cc: Mr Newton, SCD, FCO

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