

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

7 May 1986

Dear Charles,

Anglo/French Summit: Autumn 1986

The annual bilateral Summit meeting falls due in November. It is for the French to host, and thus to propose dates. But past experience suggests they will be slow to do so, and will not be offended if we take the initiative by suggesting dates when the Prime Minister would be free to travel to France. A suitable opportunity to do this will arise when French and British officials (the "coordinators") meet to review Anglo/French relations in Paris on 9 May. It would be helpful to have guidance before then on dates that might be possible for the Prime Minister.

We believe it would be best for the Summit to take place in the run-up to the 5/6 December European Council. This would point to a meeting in November. Wednesday and Thursday mornings will need to be avoided because of French and British cabinet meetings respectively. The Prime Minister will also wish to avoid Tuesdays (PQs). It will be necessary to avoid any clash with the State Opening of Parliament and the ensuing debates. The week beginning 10 November would be particularly difficult for Sir Geoffrey Howe. But otherwise we see no obvious constraints on timing. From our point of view 7 November is likely to be as good a day as any.

We assume the Prime Minister would prefer the Summit to take place within the one day. Given the hour's time difference between London and Paris, this would point to an early start, individual bilateral meetings in the morning, followed by a working lunch, plenary session, press conference and departure in the late afternoon/early evening. Would this be acceptable?

Decisions on Ministerial participation need not be taken at this stage. But we would hope that, as in previous years, Ministers closely concerned with bilateral and multilateral issues involving their French counterparts might accompany the Prime Minister.

/I am

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to Mr Channon, Mr Lawson, Mr Hurd, Mr Walker, Mr Younger, Mr Jopling, Mr Ridley, Lord Young, Mr Baker, Mr Luce, Mr Pattie and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
PS/10 Downing Street