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cc PC
cc FCO

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

7 October 1987

PROPOSED CALL BY MONSIEUR LEOTARD ON THE PRIME MINISTER

Thank you for your letter about the efforts being made by Monsieur Leotard and his staff to secure a meeting with the Prime Minister.

I am at a loss to know when or how Monsieur Wajsman had a long conversation with the Prime Minister. He was one of the members of the staff of *Le Figaro* to whom she gave an interview last January. Most of the interview was in the form of written question and answer. But there was a meeting with Monsieur Wajsman and one other in your Embassy at which a few oral questions were added and photographs taken. I was present throughout and do not recall any discussion then of a possible meeting with Monsieur Leotard. I have checked with one or two possible contacts, such as Hugh Thomas, who deny any knowledge of Monsieur Wajsman. I cannot easily check with the Prime Minister herself since her mind is on other things in Blackpool, but I have to say that I take Monsieur Wajsman's claims with a large pinch of salt.

Whatever the truth of the matter, I do not see any prospect of the Prime Minister being able to see Monsieur Leotard in the near future.

C D POWELL

His Excellency Sir Ewen Fergusson, K.C.M.G.

EA



FROM THE AMBASSADOR

BRITISH EMBASSY,
PARIS.

6 October 1987

C D Powell Esq
Private Secretary
No 10 Downing Street
London SW1

My dear Charles,

PROPOSED CALL BY M. LEOTARD ON THE PRIME MINISTER

1. We had a word ^{the} the other day about Patrick Wajsman; you may remember that John Fretwell wrote to you about him on 4 November 1986 and that you replied on 18 November 1986.

2. Wajsman, who remains an editorialist on Figaro and a personal adviser to François Léotard, spoke to my Private Secretary on 30 September to claim that Mrs Thatcher had recently responded favourably to his suggestion that she should meet Léotard in his capacity as the leader of the Parti Républicain. You told me that, to the best of your knowledge, there had been no recent contact between Wajsman and the Prime Minister, and there was certainly no commitment to see Léotard. Moreover you made it clear that, given the Prime Minister's very full programme - of which we here are well aware - there was definitely no prospect of her sparing the time to see Léotard, should that be recommended to her.

3. Peter Tibber has now had a further approach from Wajsman. He emphasised that Léotard was fully aware of what he was doing and it had his support. Wajsman had been put in touch with Mrs Thatcher by «a close friend of hers» and had had a long conversation with her before the summer; he (Wajsman) would be writing directly to Mrs Thatcher very soon.

4. I have not so far been available to see Wajsman but, in the circumstances, ought to do so, particularly because I shall be paying an official call on Léotard on Thursday 15 October. I could of course use a call by Wajsman to probe more fully his claim of direct contact with No 10 and the Prime Minister, but it would make my life easier if you could give me a «confirm or deny» answer before I see him. Perhaps a quick telephone call?



5. All this is of the nature of an arabesque on the issue of substance whether I should recommend that Léotard was a worthy candidate for Prime Ministerial attention. On that I should prefer to defer a view until after I have seen him, but my instinctive reaction is to see every action by French politicians at present as determined by relatively short term electoral considerations. In these circumstances I am sure that I ought to put my views through the regular FCO channel!

London.

Hope to see Carla again in

Best wishes,

Ewen

Ewen Fergusson

cc: A C Galsworthy Esq CMG
Private Secretary to
the Secretary of State

FRANCE : Relations PTU.

