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 Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

4 November 1987

Dear Charles,

Thank you for your letter of 23 October about your conversation with M. Bujon on that day. It was an instructive illustration of the complexities (of which my letter of 19 October warned) of the conduct of French foreign policy under cohabitation.

As regards the substance of M. Chirac's ideas as conveyed by M. Bujon, FCO and MOD officials are preparing a paper analysing the history, current activities and policy implications for the United Kingdom of the French attitude to Western defence. They hope to submit this jointly to the Foreign and Defence Secretaries by mid-November. The aim of the paper is to provide the fuller analysis for which the Prime Minister has asked (your letter of 22 October). On the basis of this work the Foreign and Defence Secretaries propose to offer their recommendations on the issues raised by the Prime Minister.

The views of M. Chirac, as well as the views of President Mitterrand himself, will be covered in the study. In the meanwhile, there is one point on which French and German intentions have become clear. The German element of the Franco-German brigade will not be taken from forces assigned to SACEUR but from German territorial forces which are under national control. The German Defence Minister made clear at the WEU Ministerial in The Hague on 27 October that the establishment of this brigade would not mean any reduction or deterioration in the German contribution to NATO.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Howe (Ministry of Defence) and to Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

L Parker

(L Parker)

Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
 10 Downing Street