



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~839 7032~~xxxxx 01-218 2111/3

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10M November 1987

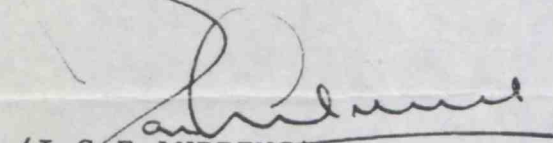
copy to

Dear Lyn,

VISIT OF M. MICHEL ROCARD

Thank you for sending John Howe a copy of your letter of 6th November to Charles Powell on the subject of the proposed visit of M. Michel Rocard to the United Kingdom. The Secretary of State would be content, in principle, to see M. Rocard. No doubt you will propose dates in due course.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Charles Powell at No 10.

Yours sincerely

(I C F ANDREWS)
Private Secretary

Lyn Parker Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

FRANCE

Relations

PT 4



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*File
to*

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

10 November, 1987.

Thank you for your letter of 6 November about the invitation to Monsieur Rocard to visit the United Kingdom.

The Prime Minister has noted that she thinks it a bit much to hand out these invitations without any reference to her, and then expect her automatically to meet the people concerned. However, she has relented to the point of saying that she will see M. Rocard if he comes and the timing is convenient.

(C.D. Powell)

Lyn Parker, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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/ as no

10 DOWNING STREET

Pine Nimble

I understand your
imitation at this,
which is entirely
justified.

On the other hand,
Rocard has declared
(not declined) his
candidature: and since you
have seen the other
three main candidates, it
is a little difficult to
blackball him. Agree to a
brief meeting? etc.

Rb. 87 (1)



Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London SW1A 2AH

6 November 1987

I think it's a bit much
to hand out these
indications without any
reference to me or then expect me
to meet the people concerned. I am
not sure that either Mitterrand
or Chirac or Bane would be very
pleased

Prime Minister

Agree to see M.

Dear Charles,

not Rocard? (Since you have
seen all the other likely
candidates, perhaps you might do).

Sir Ewen Fergusson has extended a COI Category I invitation
to visit the UK to Michel Rocard, French Socialist Party
député and presidential candidate (a personality note is
enclosed). Rocard's immediate reaction was to welcome the
opportunity such a visit would present to talk to British
leaders, particularly on European and defence issues: he
specifically mentioned the Prime Minister and the Secretary
of State for Defence. The dates remain highly uncertain,
since Rocard would have to fit any visit into his tight
campaigning schedule. December or January look the most
likely months. If diary commitments permitted, the Foreign
Secretary would invite Rocard to call on him.

CDD
b/k.

I appreciate the pressures on the Prime Minister's
diary, but we should like if possible to tell Rocard that
the Prime Minister would in principle be prepared to receive
him for a short call, should the timing of his visit permit.

Rocard is currently at the centre of the French political
stage. He commands support from a significant slice of the
French Socialist Party and has already declined his candidature
for next spring's Presidential elections. He continues to
insist that he will run for the Presidency even if Mitterrand
stands again, although many believe that he would in fact
then bow out in order not to split his Party. If, however,
Mitterrand opts not to stand again, Rocard is the most likely
choice for the Socialist Party nomination and could just
win the election if the Right failed to mobilise its full
vote in the second (and decisive) round.

DECLARED

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Rocard is on the right wing of a French Socialist Party
which is itself currently in a pragmatic mood. He is committed
to nuclear deterrence, favours close French involvement in
Western defence and has spoken of the importance of the Anglo-French
defence relationship and against too exclusive an emphasis
on the Franco-German. As Minister for Agriculture during
the French EC Presidency, he steered through the milk quota
regime in spite of farming opposition. Of the four leading
contenders for the Presidency, he is probably the most genuinely
sympathetic to the UK.

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I am copying this letter to John Howe, Ministry of Defence, and would be grateful if he would let me know whether Mr Younger would similarly be prepared in principle to receive a call by Rocard.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'L. Parker', with a small flourish underneath.

(L Parker)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
PS/No 10 Downing Street

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ROCARD, MICHEL

Député. Former Minister of Agriculture.

Born 1930 in the suburbs of Paris. Son of Professor Yves Rocard CBE, a distinguished nuclear physicist. Studied literature and entered the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA). Inspecteur des Finances 1958. Head of the Economic Budget Division in the Planning Department of the Ministry of Finance 1965. Secretary-General of the Commission des Comptes et des Budgets Economiques, 1965-67. Resigned from government service in 1967 to stand (unsuccessfully) in Legislative elections at PSU (Parti Socialiste Unifié) candidate. Secretary General of the PSU 1967-73. PSU Presidential candidate, 1969. PSU Deputy for the Yvelines, 1969-73. Joined Socialist Party 1974. Member of the National Secretariat 1975-79. PS Deputy for the Yvelines since 1978. Minister for the Plan 1981-83. Minister for Agriculture from 1983 until his resignation in 1985.

Rocard made his name as a national figure during the May events of 1968. His party was the only one to be identified with the student movement, and its leaders occupied key positions in the main student and teacher organisations. He broke with the PSU in 1974 after its failure to amalgamate with the Socialist Party. He then rose swiftly in the Socialist Party. During the past decade, Rocard has moderated his leftist image. He is an advocate of the introduction into French industry and government of autogestion (in industry, workers' control; in government, decentralisation). This is the last remaining link between the Rocard of the late 1960s and the present day. On economic policy he is a moderate.

At the PS Congress at Metz in 1979 a re-alignment of forces within the Party left Rocard and his ally Mauroy in the minority. Both remained members of the Executive bureau of the Party but lost their places as National Secretaries. In 1980 Rocard made an unsuccessful bid for the PS's nomination for the 1981 Presidential election. Subsequently he played no formal part in Mitterrand's campaign, although on the eve of the second round he was asked to appear on television to defend Mitterrand's economic policies from Giscard's accusations that they were extremist.

Rocard remains one of France's most popular politicians. Opinion polls taken after Mitterrand's victory suggested that he would have been the most popular choice of the electorate as a whole for the post of Prime Minister. But his past rivalry with Mitterrand and his political position fairly far to the right of Mitterrand's socialist coalition gave little real prospect of his being put in charge of the Government. As Minister responsible for the Plan he had the chance to put into practice his ideas about economic self-management and decentralisation, but had to combat the tendency of his Ministerial colleagues to exclude him from their deliberations. He got off to a good start at the Ministry of Agriculture in terms of his relations with the difficult farming community, but later ran into some difficulties with them over CAP reform and domestic issues. His resignation in May 1985 was allegedly motivated by opposition to the introduction of proportional representation for legislative elections. He has concentrated since on trying to strengthen his position for the 1988 Presidential elections. He remains top of the opinion polls and has announced his intention to run again to become President. But some doubt if he has either the 'killer instinct' or the organisational talent to make it to the top. He has a strong intellect, and keen political instincts. A good speaker when audible (very rapid delivery), his distinctive brand of intellectual garrulousness some times speaks more of a hyper-clever university don than a statesman of Presidential stamp.

In 1980 he visited the UK as a COI Category I sponsored visitor. He met FCO Ministers and representatives of the CBI and the TUC. Rocard speaks good English. He is divorced and remarried (to a sociologist). He has two children by each marriage.