



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 March 1990

Dear Charles,

Visit by the French Prime Minister:
European Defence Cooperation

Your letter of 23 March recorded the discussion between the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary about raising the subject of European defence cooperation with Rocard.

We suggest that the Prime Minister might take the line that the Two plus Four talks now provide the right framework for considering the external aspects of German unification. At the same time, the changes in Europe make it necessary for NATO to think through its plans and force structures. One of the themes is likely to be that the Europeans in NATO will need to take more responsibility for their own defence. This opens up new opportunities for France to draw closer to her European allies in a common defence effort. One possibility, as force levels fall in Europe, would be to consider closer integration of European forces. We hope that France will be willing to look flexibly at the options.

The Prime Minister might add that, if we are to have a more coherent approach to European defence issues, there would be advantage in rationalising and strengthening the institutions involved.

We should like to discuss these issues in depth with the French: the role of France in European defence is a key element in binding the Germans firmly into existing organisations.

I am copying this letter to Simon Webb (MOD).

*Jane,**Stephen Wall*

(J S Wall)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
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FRANCE: Vint by M. card Jan 82

