

Confidential

PM 12/11

- 1) Mr. Bullard
- 2) Lord Bridges

Mitterrand's health

I have not been in his presence for long enough to not see <sup>his</sup> 30

I saw no reason to doubt his health. His performance at the last European Council was at times unexpected but not directly attributable to this. Should we not send to Mr. 10?

Sir R. Hubbert asks (para 6 of his letter of 18 December) what impression Mr. Mitterrand gives at European Council meetings. I wondered if you or Lord Bridges had formed any impression at the last Council?

LAST PAPER

The P.M. has been more of him than any one else.

Bullard

(Sir R. Armstrong would be interested too)  
cc Lord Bridges

Mr Gladstone.

24/11

(41)

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
PARIS.Sir Michael Palliser GCMG  
PUS  
FCO

Letter is still before PM  
 Gen. 2 Feb. 1981  
 Letter submitted to go to No. 10.

Hd/WZ) for suitable diff reply psl  
 Gen. 1 week later

cc Mr Bullard. Switzerland

PS  
PS/P03

PS 21/12

WRF 01011

-7 JAN 1982

SEARCHED	INDEXED	SERIALIZED	FILED

Dear Michael [Signature] Submitted

1. I sent a savingram a little while ago (no 181 of 23 November) about M. Mitterrand's health. His latest six monthly health certificate was issued on 15 December. I enclose the text. It is full of medical mumbo-jumbo and this is skilfully used to give a thoroughly reassuring impression - although you will note that the statement in the last sentence that his health "is perfectly satisfactory in all the fields that have been examined" leaves a residual doubt that there may be some areas where his health is unsatisfactory.

2. Last week, however, I heard for the first time some talk about the President's health which seemed to me to carry a certain amount of conviction. It came from M. Ambroise Roux, the Président-Directeur Général of the Compagnie Générale d'Electricité, who has had good inside knowledge about the Elysée and its occupants for several reigns. He told me that he had had good detailed knowledge of President Pompidou's medical condition long before that became common knowledge, and he said that he had had very reliable reports on M. Mitterrand's health well before M. Mitterrand arrived at the Elysée. According to these, M. Mitterrand was suffering from a form of leukaemia which was controllable within limits by medical treatment and whose effects would be slow to develop. M. Mitterrand, as we all knew, had not expected to win the presidential election and had not regarded his health condition as being a serious obstacle to his conduct of the contest for power within the Socialist Party. When the election suddenly turned in his favour he was caught and was now bound to put the best possible face on the state of his health. According to M. Roux, the burdens of office had put some strain on M. Mitterrand, and in recent weeks he had suffered from some instability in his condition. This was now under control again and there was no reason to suppose that there would be any early health crisis for the President.

/3. M. Roux



3. M. Roux said that he had watched with care the President's recent appearance on television (my telno 1102). He had been surprised by the apparent frankness with which the President approached the health question. He had spoken of having his check-up and M. Roux had thought for a brief moment that all the rumour-mongers, including himself, were going to be confounded by the President producing the written results of his check-up, holding them up to the television camera and saying "There you are you see, I am clear". He had not done this and, after talking about his analyses, had simply concluded by saying that he was now feeling better - not that he was better and not an admission that there had ever been anything wrong, but simply the subjective comment that he was feeling better. M. Roux's conclusion was that to all intents and purposes M. Mitterrand was lying to the French people.

4. M. Roux and other distinguished non-Socialist Frenchmen who have been received by the President recently all tend to be unanimous in declaring privately afterwards that they had the feeling of dealing with a man who was not really fit. I am increasingly impressed by the unanimity of this verdict among responsible men who have close dealings with the President. I myself have had the opportunity to watch the President at close hand on several occasions recently and I have been struck by a certain oddness in his demeanour. His skin tends to be remarkably pallid and there is a certain passivity in the way in which he goes through public ceremonial. He is amiable to everyone whom he meets, but only in the most cursory, impersonal way. He makes virtually no effort to establish a direct human relationship with people who are introduced to him unless the television cameras happen to be trained on him at the particular moment, in which case he goes through the motions of being warm. He tends to blink continually and his eyes dart about in an uncertain sort of way as if he was unsure what was coming next and what was expected of him; but this is accompanied by an apparent imperturbability or perhaps immobility of manner which contradicts the evidence of internal tension supplied by his eyes. When he speaks he does so very quietly; but if he is making a speech he becomes animated in the course of it and rises to something of a crescendo in the middle, relapsing again to a quiet fireside manner as he comes to his conclusion. The crescendo tends to be accompanied by minor signs of shortage of breath. I have noticed no physical weakness in him even when being pushed around by enthusiastic crowds and the usual horde of photographers and press men. It is noticeable however that his military aide takes great care to have glasses of water on hand at any moment when there is a pause in the proceedings. In a relatively private circle he is pleasant and fairly relaxed but still not noticeably forthcoming.

/5. Observed



5. Observed symptoms, even at closer range and over a longer period than is possible in such a case, are notoriously difficult for laymen to evaluate; and doctors seem no more able than economists to agree with one another or to express themselves in clear terms. One turns inevitably to the surrounding political circumstances and judgments. Was Mitterrand's attempt to make a clandestine visit to the Val de Grâce hospital a simple misjudgment? Is the laconic (and sibylline) language of the medical communiqué standard medical caution? In which case how did the President's advisers fail to see that the combination of these things would give rise to rumour and speculation? They are well aware that the strongest asset which President Mitterrand's administration possesses is its prospect of lasting for at least another five years (until the next Legislative elections). The President's advisers should in theory be doing their utmost to preserve the integrity of that card. Equally of course the President's opponents, among whom M. Ambroise Roux must undoubtedly be counted, will be doing their best to undermine it. But even they, in turn, will know that they cannot for long make smoke without fire.

6. As you will see from the above I am somewhat more inclined now than I was a few weeks ago to think that there may be something wrong with M. Mitterrand - not something acute, but something which makes his health preoccupying in the long term. It would be very helpful to know what sort of impression M. Mitterrand gives when involved in protracted sessions at, for example, European Council meetings. I have been told that at Cancun M. Mitterrand's interventions were much less vigorous than everyone had been led to expect. Is this becoming a common experience at meetings with M. Mitterrand?

7. Paradoxically, I think that the more M. Mitterrand parades his allegedly clean bill of health, the more one becomes suspicious that there is something wrong with him.

*Yours ever,*

Reginald Hibbert

THE SECOND SIX-MONTHLY REPORT ON PRESIDENT MITTERRAND'S  
STATE OF HEALTH, PUBLISHED ON 15 DECEMBER 1981

During this period, the President of the Republic experienced considerable pain in his right thigh, involving disturbance to the functioning of the right leg.

This condition made necessary a series of precise examinations, which revealed the presence of an uncarthrosis of the spine\*, associated with a localised arthrosis\*\* of the disc in the lumbar region.

In parallel with these specific tests, other investigations were carried out, both clinically and paraclinically, and ranging over the cardio-vascular, pulmonary, gastro-hepato-enterological, renal, neurological and haematological fields.

The conclusion of these examinations led to the adoption of medical therapy with the object of curing the osteo-articular disorders.

The effectiveness of the treatment has resulted in the disappearance of the functional disturbance and the pain.

At the end of this initial six-month period, the President of the Republic has a state of health that is perfectly satisfactory in all the fields that have been examined.

Signed: Dr Claude Gubler

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\* uncarthrosis: a type of cervical spondylitis (inflammation around the vertebrae in the neck)

\*\* arthrosis: inflammation associated with a joint - in this case the inter-vertebral disc in the lower back

~~SECRET~~  
**CONFIDENTIAL**

SAVING TELEGRAM

64 8A9

CONFIDENTIAL  
FROM PARIS

TO FCO SAVING TELNO 181 OF 23 NOVEMBER 1981  
REPEATED FOR INFORMATION SAVING TO EC POSTS,  
UKDEL STRASBOURG, HM CONSULS GENERAL FRANCE

WRF 0112

7075 NOV 1981	
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1. Pl. mark up ref. in para. 4

2. ps. W.A. 57.0

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(11)

PRESIDENT MITTERRAND'S HEALTH

1. You will have seen speculation in the press about the state of President Mitterrand's health. Before the Prime Minister meets M. Mitterrand at this week's European Council you may like to have a brief comment from me.

offical

2. Recent press speculation was sparked off by a full account in last week's "Paris Match" of an extended medical examination undergone by President Mitterrand under an assumed name at a Paris hospital on 7 November. The article suggested that M. Mitterrand had appeared lame and off-colour. He had undergone comprehensive scanning tests, including examination by scintigraph and echograph.

3. Since President Mitterrand's election many virulent rumours have circulated about his health. These appear to have been largely relayed by the Opposition. According to the scandal-mongers, M. Mitterrand is suffering from cancer, although there is no agreement as to where its site may be. The "Paris Match" article has made it easier for these rumours to surface in the press.

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4. President Mitterrand has moved quickly in an effort to still the rumours. On 18 November the Elysée confirmed in a statement that President Mitterrand had been medically examined but asserted that this was in preparation for the issue in December of the next in the series of bills of health that President Mitterrand had undertaken at the press conference on 24 September to have published every six months. (The text of the first bulletin was enclosed with Arbutnott's letter of 10 July to Gladstone, WED.) On 20 November President Mitterrand himself discussed his health openly and informally with a group of journalists at the Elysée. He confirmed that, as he had revealed at his press conference on 24 September, he was suffering from back trouble, diagnosed as lumbago. This caused him considerable pain, particularly during his recent visit to Mexico when he had to remain standing for long periods, for example during the "interminable" Mexican national anthem. But he denied that he had ever suffered from anything more serious. He asserted that he had never visited a well-known Paris hospital specialising in the treatment of cancer as the press had alleged.

5. The only direct evidence that I can offer about President Mitterrand's health is that he told Mr Foot and Mr Healey on 16 November that his lumbago caused acute discomfort and that so

/far

**CONFIDENTIAL**

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far treatment had been ineffectual. His discomfort was not apparent from his performance at the Armistice Day ceremonies on 11 November. Even at the best of times President Mitterrand moves rather stiffly and is somewhat leaden in colour. It appears that for some years M. Mitterrand has had periodic medical check-ups but there is no evidence that these are attributable to any particular condition.

6. My conclusion is that no substantial evidence has come to light to suggest that President Mitterrand's performance is impaired by a health problem.

HIBBERT

FCO|WH

WED

**THIS TELEGRAM  
WAS NOT  
ADVANCED**

2  
**CONFIDENTIAL**

Paris Match (27/11/81)

# QUESTIONS SUR LA S

*Les rapports de « Paris Match » avec les divers régimes, Présidents et gouvernements ont toujours été convenables.*

*« Paris Match » est reconnu comme un magazine national et c'est toujours dans un souci d'information de nature à éclairer ses lecteurs qu'il s'est conduit à travers les embûches historiques qu'ont connu les Français : Algérie, putsch, O.a.s., mai 68... Aujourd'hui, en publiant le texte que vous allez lire, « Paris Match » n'a pour but que d'aider à informer tous les Français.*



C'est à cette entrée réservée aux personnalités dont on désire entourer la visite de discrétion, que le Président a été reçu au Val-de-Grace.



# ANTE DU PRESIDENT

## Ce jour-là, à 9 heures 15, François Mitterrand entraîne au Val-de-Grâce...

« Les Français sont en droit d'attendre de celui qu'ils ont choisi pour assumer la plus haute charge de l'Etat, des informations relatives d'une part à son patrimoine et d'autre part à son état de santé. » C'est par cette phrase que débutait le communiqué (publié le 20 mai 81) du docteur Claude Gubler, ancien externe des hôpitaux de Paris, et, ce, à la requête du président de la République. Concernant la santé de François Mitterrand, on pouvait lire : « Taille : 172 centimètres. Poids : 80 kilos. Examen cardio-vasculaire : tension artérielle prise aux deux bras : 13,5 - 8. Pouls régulier et symétrique. L'électro-cardiogramme, les différents paramètres auriculaires et ventriculaires, la repolarisation sont normaux. De même, en ce qui concerne l'examen pulmonaire clinique et radiologique, l'examen hépato-digestif, l'examen endocrinologique, neurologique, ophtalmologique et oto-rhino-laryngologique. Egalement l'appareil loco-moteur et l'examen des phanères. Les différents tests biologiques pratiqués ne montrent aucune anomalie des paramètres habituellement contrôlés au niveau chimique et hématologique. En conclusion, indique le communiqué, le bilan clinique et paraclinique est normal. L'état général de M. François Mitterrand s'est tout à fait satisfaisant et aucune anomalie aiguë ou chronique n'est décelable. » Lors de la longue maladie de Georges Pompidou, François Mitterrand n'avait fait aucune déclaration officielle. Il s'était borné à déclarer le jour de ses obsèques : « Le président de la République est mort en restant fidèle à lui-même et à sa conception du devoir. Il est important qu'un homme public offre à son pays cette valeur d'exemple. (...) Aujourd'hui, il convient de se recueillir et de réfléchir à ce qui sera bon pour la France. » Mais si Mitterrand s'est un pendant la maladie de Georges Pompidou, Gaston Defferre, alors Président du groupe socialiste à l'Assemblée nationale écrivait dans son journal « Le Provençal », en date du 5 juin 1973 : « Les Français ont le droit de savoir exactement ce qu'il en est. Leur sort en dépend. Il ne s'agit pas d'une affaire privée mais du destin de la nation à travers la personne qui a voulu en être le chef. (...) Le président de la République a le

devoir de nous informer. Nous avons le droit, si pénible que ce soit, de poser publiquement le problème. L'intérêt national est en cause. » Quant au P.c. sous la plume de René Andrieu, dans « L'Humanité » du 27 mars 1974, il déclarait : « Le parti communiste, en ce qui le concerne, ne participe pas à ce qui prend quelquefois l'allure d'un hallali. Il souhaite que ce ne soit pas la maladie mais le suffrage universel qui mette un terme au mandat du président de la République. » Déjà, en 1977, des rumeurs persistantes avaient couru concernant François Mitterrand mais celui-ci avait alors ironisé : « Laissons les médecins de Molière se livrer à leur diagnostic. Ces maladies sont d'autant plus mystérieuses que je n'en étais pas moi-même informé. Je peux éternuer quand passe un courant d'air sans qu'il faille qu'il soit mortel. J'ai l'impression, de la façon dont on m'aussule que cela dénote une certaine nostalgie. » Puis Mitterrand ajoutera plus tard : « Le meilleur démenti c'est de vivre. » Enfin, lors de sa dernière conférence de presse, en septembre dernier, François Mitterrand, devenu président de la République, déclarait : « Vous m'avez enfin demandé où en était ma santé. J'ai adopté, en étant élu, une procédure qui m'avait été recommandée d'ailleurs par beaucoup d'entre vous - pas spécialement pour moi, mais pour le titulaire de cette charge - c'est-à-dire faire connaître mon état de santé. Il paraît qu'il y a beaucoup de chefs d'Etat qui sont malades et j'ai l'impression que beaucoup voudraient m'ajouter à la liste... Je reconnais qu'il m'arrive d'éternuer... et que l'autre jour, après avoir fait des gestes inconsidérés, dans une occupation tout à fait louable, de caractère sportif, je me suis un peu tordu une vertèbre ! Au-delà, je ferai connaître tous les six mois, par un bulletin officiel, l'état de ma santé. Je l'ai fait au mois de mai dernier. Je le ferai donc - pour régulariser les six mois - au mois de décembre prochain, et je pourrai, si vous le voulez bien, le publier dès ce soir : cela va bien ! » Pourtant le samedi 7 novembre 1981 quelque chose d'anormal a lieu. Comme d'habitude, le président de la République a passé la nuit à

son domicile parisien du 22, rue de Bièvre. Son état doit lui inspirer quelque souci, ce matin-là, car à 9 h 15, le professeur Laverdan, gastro-entérologue et patron de la clinique médicale du Val-de-Grâce, le nouvel hôpital militaire ultra-moderne inauguré en janvier 1977, reçoit un appel ultra-confidentiel annonçant l'arrivée imminente de François Mitterrand. C'est dans cet hôpital que toutes les personnalités politiques ou militaires, françaises ou étrangères viennent se faire soigner dans la discrétion la plus absolue, l'hôpital étant tenu en plus du secret médical, au secret militaire. Les médecins qui s'y trouvent appartiennent à l'élite professionnelle du service de santé des armées. Ces hommes, pour la plupart de grands « patrons », disposent d'un matériel hautement compétitif et perfectionné qui va du laser en ophtalmologie à la surveillance informatisée des principales fonctions vitales de service des urgences et de soins intensifs. Les installations techniques de radiologie - onze salles -, de radiothérapie sont organisées avec la plus grande efficacité et dans le respect absolu du malade. Les matériels sont parmi les plus modernes actuellement en service. Le bloc opératoire - sept salles dont quatre ventilées par flux laminaire - et le bloc de stérilisation sont construits et équipés selon des normes rigoureuses. C'est dans ce nouvel « Val » qu'il n'a rien à envier aux hôpitaux les plus modernes du monde que va donc arriver François Mitterrand. A 9 h 20, une voiture marron, sans aucun signe distinctif, pénètre dans l'Ancien Val-de-Grâce par la porte située rue Saint-Jacques. En effet, il n'y a pas de barrière automatique, cette entrée et il suffit que les grilles soient ouvertes préalablement pour éviter une indiscretion supplémentaire. Le véhicule traversant l'ancien hôpital militaire, passe devant l'église de style baroque, contourne le nouveau bâtiment à cinq étages en surface et deux en sous-sol et stoppe devant le sur et rez-de-chaussée inférieur, là même où s'arrêtent les ambulances amenant des malades dont on ne désire pas qu'ils traversent le rez-de-chaussée supérieur ou un trop grand public stationne en permanence. Deux hommes accompagnent le Pres-

# L'étrange visite d'un certain Albert Biot

dem. Un de ses fils (ou quelqu'un qui lui ressemble énormément), et un chauffeur. A la porte attend le général Thomas, fortement entumé de jour-là, grand patron du Val-de-Grace et le professeur Laverdan, « pont » de la gastro-entérologie. On l'a nommé au Val-de-Grace où l'on savait que sa réputation amènerait une clientèle de très haut rang. Ce fils de gendarme de 55 ans s'est entouré d'une équipe trite sur le volet et a ainsi à ses côtés les meilleurs spécialistes du service qu'il dirige.

La porte automatique du sas s'ouvre et François Mitterrand, entouré par le chauffeur et son fils, pénètre dans le couloir aux murs blancs cassés qui mène au S.u.s.i. (le service des urgences). Là, pour des raisons évidentes de sécurité, Albert Biot ou Biot. Des témoins qui le reconnaissent alors diront qu'il a le teint « jaune citron », marche avec difficulté mais qu'il n'est pas nécessaire – à moins qu'il ait lui-même refusé – de le placer sur un brancard ou dans une chaise roulante. Il est 9 h 25. Que se passe-t-il ensuite ? Le Président est amené dans la salle de radio-diagnostic. Dans cette grande salle, une table recouverte d'un drap. Au plafond, sur un rail, un gigantesque bras articulé et télécommandé se place exactement où le souhaite le manipulateur. Ce dernier, un adjudant-chef de 51 ans et qui vient chaque matin à pied à l'hôpital est de garde ce jour-là. C'est lui qui va faire une injection intraveineuse afin de procéder à une scintigraphie, procédé de diagnostic consistant à suivre le cheminement dans l'organisme d'un isotope

radioactif émetteur de rayons gamma. Le rayonnement qu'émet cet isotope est enregistré par un compteur à scintillations et reporté sur un document qui donne des renseignements topographiques sur l'organe observé, sur son intégrité, sur ses modifications tissulaires, etc. (L'exemple classique est généralement celui de la thyroïde. La thyroïde est avide d'iode. Si la glande fonctionne normalement, l'iode injecté sera fixé d'une façon homogène. Grâce à un écran, il est alors possible de suivre le trajet de l'iode et de voir se dessiner la glande sur une plaque photographique. Si la glande ne fonctionne pas, on ne verra rien. Si elle ne fonctionne que partiellement, on verra apparaître une partie dessinée et une partie noire. Si cette glande a des nodules cancéreux, on verra apparaître des points noirs que l'on appelle des nodules froids.)

François Mitterrand, alias Albert Biot ou Biot, restera au Val-de-Grace, ce samedi matin-là, jusqu'à 10 h 30 avant de revenir rue de Bièvre. Ce même jour, mais à 14 heures, François Mitterrand repart pour le Val-de-Grace à bord d'une CX qui ne comporte toujours aucun signe distinctif. Il s'agit, cette fois, de faire un « cliché tardif ». C'est-à-dire de voir comment s'est fixé le produit injecté le matin même.

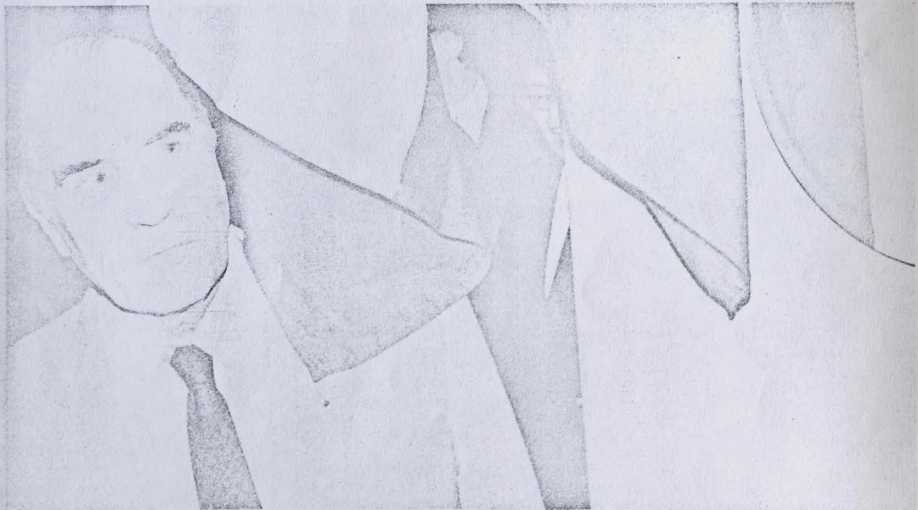
Il n'y a qu'une seule personne qui accompagne le Président et le trajet effectué est le même. François Mitterrand restera au Val-de-Grace jusqu'à 17 heures. Le docteur Laverdan a auprès de lui un radiologue, M. Boquet, un anesthésiste, un rhumatologue. En fait, toute

l'équipe d'urgence de son service est en alerte. La gastro-entérologie étant la spécialité de Laverdan, c'est lui qui prend ce cas en main, personnellement. On fait également une échographie au Président de la République. Ce dernier, entre chaque séance d'examen, se repose dans une chambre au mobilier austère et aux murs oranges.

L'échographie – une sorte de sonar ou de radar que l'on passe sur le corps du patient, durera 45 minutes. Chaque examen, chaque résultat sera contrôlé deux fois.

Le résultat de l'examen général et le diagnostic qui en découle, connu des seuls docteurs Laverdan et du général Thomas, sont alors confiés au Président. Après ces visites et ces examens, il aurait été décidé, dans la discrétion la plus totale, d'alerter une quinzaine de spécialistes de très haute compétence dans le but de former une équipe permanente qui serait en mesure de traiter éventuellement le Président à l'Élysée.

Le dossier Albert Biot ou Biot, si un deuxième exemplaire existe, se trouve enfermé dans le coffre du docteur Laverdan, au Val-de-Grace. Ce n'est que le samedi soir 7 novembre, après cette longue journée d'examen, qui auraient dû se dérouler dans le plus grand secret, que le personnel dirigeant du Val a reçu l'ordre formel d'oublier ce qui s'était passé ce jour-là. Mais les témoins qui ont vu François Mitterrand ignoraient qu'ils n'auraient pas dû voir passer ce certain Albert Biot ou Biot et que, ce malade-là, personne n'était censé l'avoir rencontré. ■



Président de la République, François Mitterrand continue à assumer toutes les fonctions de sa charge.



36

WRIF 0101 0111

RECEIVED  
25 NOV 1981

INDEX P. 23

Mr Vereker

I spoke to PS/PUS who is satisfied that Paris Seagram No. 81 answers the PUS's enquiry. Repasson D. will provide a copy of her article direct.  
M. M. 24

PS/PUS

cc Mr Bullard  
Mr Fergusson  
Mr Arbuthnott, HM Embassy, Paris  
PUSD

PRESIDENT MITTERRAND'S HEALTH

- A  
36
- The PUS has asked about the state of President Mitterrand's health. Press speculation has revived as a result of his visit to hospital on 7 November - just after his visit to Mexico - for a routine check-up. We are told that the check-up preceded what is to be a regular six-monthly statement on the President's health.
  - The Embassy in Paris have now reaffirmed the assessment in Mr Arbuthnott's letter to Mr Gladstone of 10 July.
  - Mr Foot saw President Mitterrand on 16 November. The President told him that he was suffering from lumbago. One of Mr Foot's aides told the department last week that the President was evidently moving with some difficulty and pain.
  - At this stage I do not think we have any firm evidence that the President has a serious illness. We are checking to see whether anything further is known from other sources.
- B  
1516

23 November 1981

*P. Vereker*  
P W M VEREKER

Western European Department

I showed him to see the newspaper in Paris March as what was said by the Elyseé about it.

*M. Michael Palliser*  
MICHAEL PALLISER



WR F 010/1

RECEIVED TELETYPE NO. 13

25 NOV 1981

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

16/11/81  
 Mr. Bullard  
 Mr. Fergusson

(35)  
 (30)

✓ R.D.S.  
 Mr. Verelst  
 Mr. Amel Prince

Mr Gladstone  
 WED

I think some know?

July  
 13/81

1. The PUS has seen Mexico City saying telno 19 about the visit to Mexico by the French President. He takes the views of the French Ambassador with a certain pinch of salt since it must be remembered that he was a very close associate of President Pompidou.

2. The purpose of this minute, however, is to ask for an assessment of President Mitterrand's health. I believe that the PUS asked some time ago for anything that we knew from secret sources but Mr Tickell's description of President Mitterrand in Mexico is disturbing. Presumably those who attended the Cancun Summit may have had opportunities of their own to see President Mitterrand at close quarters.

Mexico City  
 Says telno 19  
 of 3 Nov is with  
 Young's letter of  
 2 Nov to Gladstone.

*R. A. Burns*

R A Burns  
 PS/PUS

12 November 1981

cc: Mr Evans  
 Sir P Preston



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

6 July 1981

Mr H J Arbuthnott  
British Embassy  
PARIS

WRF 010/1	
NO. 13	20 1981
REGISTRY	1 / 0
Section Taken	

see 16

Dear Hugh.

HEALTH OF PRESIDENT MITTERRAND

- (14)

1. I enclose a copy of a self-explanatory minute by Crispin Tickell. This was the first rumour I had heard of President Mitterrand's possible ill-health: and I had certainly not dreamt that he might have had a stroke between the first and second rounds. Has anything come to your ears that might tend to confirm or deny the rumour?

*Yours ever*  
*David*

D A S Gladstone  
Western European Department

(14)



Mr Burns  
PS/PUS

WRF 0101	
RECEIVED	
20 JUL 1981	
DESK OFFICER	
INDEX	PA
	6

HAWKED  
with response  
to Hammy

HEALTH OF PRESIDENT MITTERRAND

1. Last weekend I heard from friends well placed in Paris that President Mitterrand's health was in some jeopardy, and that in political circles there was already talk about who might be his successor if he failed to survive his seven year term.

2. I have no means of judging the accuracy of this story, which came by a number of hands from his personal doctor, but it is in essence this: that he suffered a minor stroke between the first and second rounds of the Presidential election and that it was for this reason that he looked and behaved in so uncharacteristic a fashion in the events following his victory on the second round. My informants also said that there had been rumours in Paris that he had been suffering from a form of cancer for the last two or three years but that it was 'manageable'.

3. I hate to spread alarm and despondency but the story, if you have not heard it, might be worth checking. I remember similar stories, most of them unbelieved, which sprang up not long after President Pompidou first fell ill in 1972/3.

*Crispin Tickell*

3 July 1981

Crispin Tickell

*We had been asked Paris what they knew of this.*

*[Signature]*  
MICHAEL PALLISER  
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