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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 December 1984

Dear Colin,

FRANCO-BRITISH COUNCIL

The Prime Minister has reached the conclusion that, with the Franco-British Council now well-launched, it should no longer be considered indispensable for Prime Ministers to take part in its meetings. In future Foreign Ministers should be regarded as the natural representatives of their respective Governments.

Clearly the implementation of this decision will need to be handled delicately and in close cooperation with the French Government. The aim must be a joint conclusion in the sense which I have indicated. Although there is some considerable time before the next meeting, there is much to be said for getting the point established now. You will wish to consider how this can most effectively be handled.

Yours sincerely,
Charles Powell

C D POWELL

Colin Budd Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

29 November, 1984

Dear Charles,

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Franco-British Council Conference

For the Prime Minister's visit to Avignon, I enclose
as requested eight copies of the following:

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- (i) programme
- (ii) a note on the Franco-British Council and on the themes of the Conference
- (iii) British and French delegation lists
- (iv) personality notes on
 - (a) M. Fabius
 - (b) M. Hernu)
 - (c) M. Gatel) French Ministers at the Friday evening dinner
 - (d) M. Keller, Prefet du Vaucluse (Avignon area)
 - (e) M. Roux, Mayor of Avignon
 - (f) M. Pontillon) French and British Presidents
 - (g) Sir Philip de Zuluetta) of the FBC

*
Sent
separately

Can I remind you of my letter of 4 October, drawing attention to remarks made by M. Fabius on UK economic policy in media interviews (copy attached for ease of reference)? Although no further remarks of this nature by Fabius have come to our attention, we would maintain our advice that the Prime Minister should take advantage of the various contacts she will have with him in Paris and Avignon to seek to put straight the misconceptions about Britain which he seems to harbour.

I am sending copies of this letter, and its enclosures to Graham Sandiford (NIO), David Normington (Department of Employment) and Paul Pegler (Chief Secretary's Office, HM Treasury).

Yours ever,

Gavin Budd

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

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FRANCO BRITISH COUNCIL CONFERENCE, AVIGNON
PROGRAMME FOR VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER, 30 NOVEMBER/1 DECEMBER
Friday 30 November

- 1730 Arrival at Orange military airfield by special flight from Paris (Orly).
Met by M. Laurent Fabius, Prime Minister,
M. Jean Keller, Prefect, Commissioner of the Republic for the Department of Vaucluse,
M. Jean-Bernard de Vaivre, Deputy Chief of Protocol
- 1740 Departure by car for the Prefecture at Avignon.
M. Laurent Fabius will travel in the Prime Minister's car
- 1805 Arrival at the Prefecture. M. Fabius takes leave of the Prime Minister
- 1845 Prime Minister and M. Fabius leave the Prefecture for Avignon Town Hall
- 1850 Arrival at the Town Hall. Met by M. Andre Roux, Mayor of Avignon. Reception given by the Mayor.
- 1930 Prime Minister and M. Fabius return to the Prefecture
appx
- 2020 Prime Minister leaves Prefecture for the Palais de Papes
- 2025 Prime Minister arrives at the Palais de Papes conducted by the Deputy Head of Protocol to the Salle du Grandtinel. Welcomed by M. Fabius, Senator Robert Pontillon, President of the French Section of the Franco-British Council, Sir Philip de Zulueta, President of the British Section of the Franco-British Council.
- Aperitifs in the Salle du Grandtinel
- Presentation of the Members of the Franco British Council to the Prime Minister and M. Fabius. Dinner in the Salle du Conclave, hosted by M. Fabius in honour of the Prime Minister (black tie/long dress)
- Speeches by both Prime Ministers
- 2245 Prime Minister takes leave of M. Fabius and returns
appx to the Prefecture

Saturday 1 December

- 0800 Prime Minister leaves Prefecture for Orange Military
appx airfield. At Orange, Deputy Chief of Protocol bids farewell
- 0830 Departure of special aircraft for London

THE FRANCO-BRITISH COUNCIL

I Origins and Activities

1. The Franco-British Council (FBC) was set up by the French and British Governments after The Queen's State Visit to France in May 1972, with the aim of developing contacts between the two countries in the fields of economics, politics, culture and science. Small committees of leading figures in these fields promote, with the aid of a modest Government grant (a little over £50,000 per annum on the UK side) a programme of seminars and other activities (bestowal of Awards and Fellowships, arrangement of Exchange visits, etc). Recently seminars have covered Agriculture, Health and Social Security and Regional Development - a seminar to discuss the preservation of our respective National Heritages is under discussion. The Council's activities are coordinated on the UK side by a full-time Director (currently Mr James Hadley).

2. Since 1980, major conferences have been organised every two years (Bordeaux 1980, Edinburgh 1982). These conferences have drawn together a larger number of participants for more wide-ranging discussions of Franco-British relations than those in the seminars. The French and British Prime Ministers have attended part of each of the Conferences.

II The Avignon Conference

3. The theme of the Conference is to be 'The Entente Cordiale - Where do we stand now', and the Conference will seek to examine the strengths and weaknesses in Franco-British relations today.



In preparation for the Conference, the FBC commissioned a survey by the BBC of attitudes of young people in Britain and France towards each other (the results were published at the beginning of this week and are relatively encouraging - 72% of French people found the English ''sympathique'' and 61% of English people thought the French were ''nice''). Four committees will discuss Security issues (Franco-British cooperation in European Defence, the Atlantic Alliance and defence procurement); Economic cooperation (attitudes to extra-European competition and world indebtedness: obstacles to bilateral trade); social problems (a comparison of our approaches to the recession and the problem of unemployment) and Communications (ways of developing cultural and ''physical'' exchanges).

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
28 November 1984

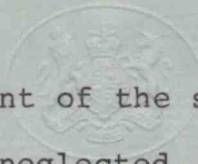


FABIUS, LAURENT

Prime Minister since July 1984. Married with one child. Speaks good English.

Born 1946 in Paris, son of an antique dealer. On graduation from ENA, entered the Conseil d'Etat. Recruited as Principal Personal Assistant to Mitterrand. Socialist Deputy for Seine-Maritime since 1978. Official spokesman for the PS 1979-81. Ministre-délégué for the budget 1981-83. Minister of Industry and Research 1983-84.

Fabius is one of the star members of the new generation of Socialist Party politicians. He has a brilliant academic record. Before his appointment as a Minister he made a notable contribution in the National Assembly from the Opposition benches, particularly on financial and economic questions. Despite his close links with President Mitterrand, his role as Budget Minister was subordinated to that of Delors, the Minister of the Economy and Finance, with whom he was said to have a number of differences on policy during their first few months in office. His appointment to the Ministry of Industry, where he also covers Research, Energy and the PTT, was a mark of the high esteem in which Mitterrand holds him. In his first months in the job, Fabius faithfully reflected the President's view that nationalised industries should run their own affairs and



that the private element of the socialists' mixed economy should not be neglected. This pragmatic, liberal image fits well with Mitterrand's apparent intention to move towards the political centre before the 1986 legislative elections.

The appointment of a young, energetic technocrat as Prime Minister was seen as a move by Mitterrand to recapture the political initiative after the Socialists' poor showing in the European parliamentary elections. No one doubts Fabius' intellectual gifts, nor his capacity for hard work - but some question whether he has yet had time to develop the political skills and strength of character demanded of a Prime Minister.

HERNU, CHARLES



Minister of Defence since 1981.

Born 1923 in Finistere. Studied law at Lyons. Journalist. Radical deputy for the Seine 1956-58. For part of this time Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Assembly. Appointed Délégué Général of the Federation de la Gauche 1965, and Vice-President 1967. Member of Management Committee of the PS since 1971. Mitterrand faction. Won (against Communist opposition) the important mairie of Villeurbane (near Lyons) in 1977. PS Deputy for the Rhone, 1978-81.

Hernu is one of Mitterrand's lieutenants from the days of the Convention des Institutions Républicaines. He staked his political fortunes on the Federation of the Left between 1965 and 1968, but the Socialists and Radicals never liked him and following the break-up of the Federation he was on the fringe of the opposition. His victory in the 1977 Municipals raised his stock in the party considerably. As the PS expert on defence affairs he was at the centre of the party's internal debate on nuclear weapons, favouring the maintenance of the French nuclear deterrent. His views have prevailed, despite some continuing opposition among the rank and file. As Minister he seems to have gained the respect of the Armed Forces, despite problems over the defence budget.



M. Hernu is rather reserved, despite a superficial fluffness. He seems quite well disposed towards Britain. He has been twice married. His present wife is a freelance journalist. Four children.

GATEL, JEAN



State Secretary attached to the Prime Minister with responsibility for Socio-Economic Affairs since July 1984.

Born 1948 at Vienne in Isère. Studied history, geography and economics at the Universities of Lyon and Aix-en-Provence. Secondary school teacher 1971-81. Member of Orange Municipal Council since 1977. PS Deputy for the Vaucluse since 1981. Secretary of the Defence Commission of the National Assembly 1981-83. State Secretary in the Ministry of Defence 1983-84. Member of the CERES faction.

Gatel first came to Hernu's attention as a student at the University of Lyon. He appears to have impressed Hernu by his work on the Defence Commission of the National Assembly. But his appointment as the Minister of Defence probably owed as much to Mitterrand's desire to bolster the Left's standing in the Vaucluse (where the Socialists did badly in the 1983 municipal elections) as to Gatel's competence as a defence specialist. He has made little public impact as a Minister.

Remarried. Two children.



KELLER, JEAN

Prefet, Commissaire de la République du Vaucluse since early 1984. Born 1921 in Germany, the son of a General. He graduated in law from Toulouse University. His career has been throughout in the prefectural service and includes a term in Guadeloupe (1960-64) and five years in the office of the Minister responsible for French Overseas Departments and Territories (DOMTOM) 1964-69.

Monsieur Keller has served as sous-prefet in several regions of France (Condom, Vichy, Alès) and was prefet in the Pyrénées-Orientales (from 1982) before moving to Avignon.

Married with one daughter and two sons, Monsieur Keller is something of a connoisseur of wine : he hails from Cahors and is fond of the local wine (the grape harvest in the Cahors area has been severely damaged by the weather this year). Madame Keller is said to be fond of dogs.



ROUX, JEAN-PIERRE

Mayor of Avignon.

Born 1938. Monsieur Roux, who is an engineer by profession, is an RPR member and a friend of Monsieur Chirac. He is a member of the European Parliament. He seems to be not very often in Avignon, but spends a lot of time in Paris. He is well disposed towards the United Kingdom. Married with two children. He is an enthusiast of the Vaucluse and was Député for the region from 1968 to 1973.

PONTILLON, ROBERT



President of the French Section of the Franco-British Council.

Born 1921 in Paris. Deported by the Germans to Czechoslovakia. Studied law at the University of Paris. Journalist on various Socialist papers. Cabinet of the Junior Minister for Information 1956-57; and the Minister for Overseas Territories 1957. Director General of the Office de Coopération Radiophonique 1962-63. Director of education television in the Thomson Houston Company since 1964. Member of the Management Committee of the Socialist Party since 1963. Mayor of Suresnes 1965-83. Conseiller Général for Suresnes since 1967. PS National Secretary for International Relations 1971-79. PS Senator for Hauts-de-Seine since 1977. President of the French Section of the Franco-British Council since 1981.

Pontillon is agreeable and well-disposed, but notably pleased with himself. As PS National Secretary for International Relations he was regarded as being on the right of the party on account of his "Atlanticist" views and contacts with the Social Democratic Parties of Northern Europe. He no longer carries much weight in the Party, particularly since the departure of Mauroy, to whom he remains close.

Married. One son. His wife, who is a former member of the Executive Bureau of the PS, was Mauroy's Private Secretary at the Matignon. Both Pontillons speak good English.



ZULUETA, Sir Philip de

Chairman, British Section, Franco-British Council since 1981.

Born 1925. New College, Oxford (MA). Welsh Guards (1943-47). Foreign Service 1949. Moscow 1950-52. Private Secretary to successive Prime Ministers (Lord Avon, Mr MacMillan, Sir A Douglas-Home) 1955-64. Assistant Secretary, HM Treasury, 1962. Resigned from Foreign Service, 1964. Director, subsequently Chief Executive and Chairman, Hill Samuel 1965-81. Chairman Tanks Consolidated Investments Ltd, since 1983.

Member of FBC since its inception in 1972. Former member of BBC Advisory Council. Member of CBI Council and Director of a number of industrial and financial companies.

Married, two children.