

PRIME MINISTER

INVITATION FROM PRESIDENT MITTERRAND

I attach a copy of the minute which I have sent to Sir Robert Armstrong about President Mitterrand's invitation, following our discussion this morning.

I have asked Robert not to act on it until Monday, just in case you have any further thoughts over the weekend.

Obviously there is something to be said for being seen to consult your two principal European allies before you go to Moscow. It would make an impact on the Russians and on public opinion here. Bernard thinks that it would be to your advantage politically. Although it might raise expectations about your Moscow visit, he thinks that these would be manageable.

I have considered whether it might not be possible to arrange for ~~the~~ you, Mitterrand and Kohl to meet together on 22 March in Paris. But that might look to the Americans a bit like ganging up and would be resented by some of the other European NATO members (although I would not take that too seriously). It would be better to do it separately; and it would be technically feasible to get you to an early lunch with Mitterrand at Rambouillet, and on to an afternoon meeting with Chancellor Kohl (which might be at some convenient air base close to his weekend home).

But I know that your strong feeling is that you need the time to catch up on your boxes after the Central Council speech. You will of course 'lose' four days in Moscow. We don't anyway know whether Mitterrand (or Kohl) could manage 22 March. And I am not sure that you would actually gain a great deal in substance from a talk.

So I think you are probably right to defer a talk with Mitterrand until later.

C D P
C.D. POWELL

6 March 1987

PERSONAL

P.S. Please now see
further minute from
RTA behind
BM2BCV



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

I have discussed with the Prime Minister your minute of 5 March regarding the suggestion by President Mitterrand that the Prime Minister should meet him for an informal and private talk about Mr. Gorbachev's latest arms control proposals.

Although the Prime Minister would, in principle, welcome such a talk, there are difficulties over timing. In particular, there seems no realistic prospect that she could meet President Mitterrand before her visit to Moscow. I have discussed with her the possibility of using the one free day which she has left (Sunday 22 March) to fly to Paris to see President Mitterrand and perhaps also on to Germany for a brief talk with Chancellor Kohl ahead of her Moscow visit. But she feels that this would leave her no time for contingencies and for catching up on other work. Subject to further reflection, she would prefer not to pursue this possibility.

Looking to the period after her Moscow visit, there is an additional complication in that she has invited M. Chirac to lunch with her at Chequers on 26 April to discuss the outcome of her visit to Moscow and the prospects for his own forthcoming visit. A separate visit to Paris before that might be overdoing it. It would of course take the gilt off M. Chirac's gingerbread.

I think that the best course, therefore, is to say to M. Attali that the Prime Minister would welcome a chance for a talk with M. Mitterrand in due course and is grateful for his invitation. Sadly it is unlikely that she can take up his invitation before her own visit to Moscow. In any case, her understanding is that the President's position and her own on Mr. Gorbachev's offer are fairly close. If the President were content, she would like to be in touch with him in due course to propose a date, possibly at a weekend, when she might go over to Paris to talk with him.

C.D. POWELL
6 March 1987

Monday 23 March

0715	Hair
1000	Diary meeting
1030-1100	Meeting of colleagues
1100	E(A)?
1200	Strategy Group +SS
1300	Lunch for colleagues
1430-1500	Chairman +SS
1500	S/S Health
1530	Baroness Faithful +S/S Health +AB
1630-1715	Mr Orlov +CDP
1730-1830	Keep free

Ref. A087/629

MR POWELL

I have just had a telephone call from Monsieur Attali at the Elysée.

2. He recalled the President's visit to the Prime Minister after the Reykjavik summit, and reminded me that the Prime Minister and the President had agreed that it could be useful for them to meet again for a similar informal and private talk if there were further developments in the East-West and arms control situation. He said that the President thought that it would be useful if the Prime Minister and he could meet again for a further talk in the light of Mr Gorbachev's latest "offer", and he would like to invite the Prime Minister to go and have lunch with him in Paris or Rambouillet for such a talk.

3. He had no particular date in mind: dates would be for discussion, if the Prime Minister shared his view that in principle it would be a good idea for the two of them to meet.

4. Nothing was said between us as to whether it would be better for such a meeting to take place before or after the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow.

5. The meeting would be on the same basis as last time: the Prime Minister and the President on their own, each with one note take, and an interpreter.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

5 March 1987