

SECRET AND STRICTLY PERSONAL

My Record
cc Master.



11(a-c)

FILE
DA
PC

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

8 December 1989

Dear Sir,

GERMANY

President Mitterrand asked to see the Prime Minister immediately following the session of the European Council this afternoon. He got down to business without delay. There were other problems of much greater importance than the Social Charter, which had just been discussed in the Council, which he and the Prime Minister needed to talk about. He was very worried about Germany. Gorbachev had spoken to him very harshly on the subject and the time had come for action. He and the Prime Minister needed to consider what role might be played by the Four Powers.

The Prime Minister said her reaction had been much the same. She felt the Four Powers ought to meet soon and she had already mentioned this idea to one or two other Heads of Government. All reports from East Germany were indicating that there could be a total collapse of the system with increasing demands for reunification. If we were not careful, reunification would just come about. If that were to happen all the fixed points in Europe would collapse: the NATO front-line: the structure of NATO and the Warsaw Pact: Mr. Gorbachev's hopes for reform. No doubt Britain and France and other European countries would try to resist. But we would probably face a fait accompli. This was why she thought we must have a structure to stop this happening and the only one available was the Four Power arrangement. The Four Powers still had certain responsibilities for Germany and Berlin. President Mitterrand interjected that the Germans seemed completely to have forgotten this. The Prime Minister said that Chancellor Kohl had no conception of the sensitivities of others in Europe, and seemed to have forgotten that the division of Germany was the result of a war which Germany had started. Before taking a decision on summoning a Four Power meeting we would all need to consult the United States. It was also possible that we would be pre-empted by the Soviet Union. She had just heard that a message was on the way from Mr. Shevardnadze proposing a meeting.

President Mitterrand repeated that he had found Mr. Gorbachev much harsher on the subject of Germany than he had expected.

SECRET AND STRICTLY PERSONAL

b

He was particularly worried about his troops in East Germany and their families. But in practice there was not much Gorbachev could do. If his forces were attacked, they would no doubt open fire. But he could hardly move his divisions forward. The Germans had probably analysed this which was why they were pressing towards reunification. President Mitterrand said that he was very critical of Chancellor Kohl's ten point plan and speech. At least Brandt's statements were much more thoughtful. He acknowledged the need for two German states. But Kohl was speculating on the national adrenalin of the German people and it seemed that nothing could stop him. Indeed it was very difficult to withstand the drive of a people. In history Germany had never found its true frontiers: they were a people in constant movement and flux. At this, the Prime Minister produced her map showing various configurations of Germany from her handbag to underline President Mitterrand's point. President Mitterrand continued that the German people were in a process of motion and we did not have many cards to stop them. Nor could the Russians do much. It seemed that the United States did not have the will. All that was left was Britain and France. He was fearful that he and the Prime Minister would find themselves in the situation of their predecessors in the 1930s who had failed to react in the face of constant pressing forward by the Germans. For the moment he agreed with the Prime Minister that all that could be done was to have a Four Power meeting. This might reassure Gorbachev.

The Prime Minister said it would also be important to have a strong communique from the European Council referring to the Helsinki Agreement and the need to maintain the structure of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. President Mitterrand said that he had given Herr Genscher a piece of his mind on the matter, warning him that Germany's behaviour was a lesson which others in Europe would not forget. It might be a case of Britain, France, the Soviet Union and Italy coming together to contain Germany. Indeed he had even put this thought to Mr. Gorbachev. German reunification depended on many elements, most of them beyond our control. It might happen. It would happen. But if it did so simply as a result of German diktat which took no notice of the Allies it would be disastrous.

The Prime Minister said that the meeting of EC Heads of Government in Paris had come up with the right answer and the aim ought to be to reaffirm that now. President Mitterrand agreed but noted that Chancellor Kohl had already strayed well beyond the conclusions of the Paris meeting. He felt we were on the threshold of momentous events. We might find ourselves in a position where we had to say no to the Germans. At moments of great danger in the past France had always established special relations with Britain. He felt that such a time had come again. We must draw together and stay in touch. If the Russians were indeed proposing a meeting, we should co-ordinate our response. He would be happy to come across to the UK at any time to see the Prime Minister and continue their discussion. He hoped there would be discussions between the Foreign Secretary and M. Dumas. He and the Prime Minister

should meet again tomorrow before she left Strasbourg. The Prime Minister said that she agreed it was very important for the two of them and their governments to keep in touch, although knowledge of their discussions should be very tightly restricted. She would brief only the Foreign Secretary.

The Prime Minister noted that President Mitterrand was shortly going to East Germany. President Mitterrand said that Chancellor Kohl had been panicked by this and brought forward his own visit to be sure that he got there first.

My record may sound rather breathless but this actually reflects President Mitterrand's manner and approach. The subject matter is clearly sensitive and should be held very tight.

I am copying this letter to Brian Hawtin (Ministry of Defence) and Sir Robin Butler.

Yours sincerely


(C.D. POWELL)

J.S. Wall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.