

Ref. A084/57

MR COLES

c Mr Williamson

Monsieur Attali rang from Paris this afternoon, to say three things:

(1) The President was very grateful for the rearrangement of the Summit dates to meet his domestic problem, and was entirely happy with the dates now proposed.

(2) The President recalls that the Prime Minister suggested, when they met at Athens, that she might come over to Paris for an informal meeting with the President. The President thinks that this is an extremely valuable idea, and he hopes very much that the Prime Minister will be able to come at an early date. Specifically, he invites her to lunch on either Monday 16 January or Monday 23 January. It is envisaged that the President will be accompanied by Monsieur Attali, and that I would accompany the Prime Minister. There would be no one else present (save for interpretation).

(3) The new Minister for European Affairs, Monsieur Dumas, will shortly be coming to London. He will be asking to see the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and to see me; and it was obvious that he very much hoped that he would also have a chance to meet the Prime Minister.

2. I promised to consult the Prime Minister about the invitation to lunch on 16 or 23 January and to get in touch with Monsieur Attali again as soon as possible.

3. This development rather changes the complexion of the affair. I understand that, when the Prime Minister saw the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's proposal that she should take an initiative on this, she indicated that, when she and the President met at Athens, the suggestion that she should go over to Paris had come not from the President but from her. The latest call develops her



initiative into his invitation, and the Prime Minister would now not be knocking at the President's door but responding to his invitation. It was clear from what Monsieur Attali said that the President would see great value in an early meeting with the Prime Minister. That seems to strengthen the case for an early meeting as proposed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

4. No doubt a meeting at this stage would be less likely to discuss details of a possible settlement than to explore the political will on each side to reach a mutually satisfactory settlement. It could be very useful for the Prime Minister to have talked to President Mitterrand before he meets the Federal Chancellor at the end of January or early in February: this combination of meetings could give a strong impetus to the search for a solution during the French Presidency of the European Community.

5. I am sending a copy of this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. I should be grateful for instructions as to how I should respond to Monsieur Attali.

RIA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

5 January 1984

**. and indeed before she herself sees
Mr Craxi later this month.*

FIVE

SH.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Meeting between the Prime Minister and President Mitterrand

The Prime Minister has seen your minute of 5 January.

Since President Mitterrand has now taken the initiative and offered the Prime Minister two dates for lunch in Paris, Mrs. Thatcher feels that she will have to accept. 16 January is impossible (because the EXCO delegation from Hong Kong will be calling on the Prime Minister in the morning) but 23 January is acceptable.

You should know that the Prime Minister has indicated reluctance to see the new French Minister for European Affairs when he comes to London. Perhaps you need not comment on this matter when you speak again to M. Attali.

As regards attendance at the lunch, the Prime Minister has minuted that she thinks it would be right for me to accompany her to Paris since her normal practice is to have a Private Secretary with her on these occasions.

It would be helpful if, when you speak again to M. Attali, you could establish the precise time when the Prime Minister should arrive at the Elysee so that we can make our plans for the visit.

I am copying this minute to Mr. Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

A. J. COLES

6 January, 1984



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister.

Please see Robert Armstrong's minute

2. You could not go to Paris on 16 January because EXCO will be here that morning.

3. You could go on Monday, 23 January returning by the General deputation at 1830.

4. Do you want to? *As he has just finished his two dates - I shall have to*

5. Will you see Monsieur Dumes if he comes? *No*

6. I think you should take a private secretary to Paris. The principle that your private staff record your conversations is important - and it is not for the French to dictate your party. I suggest we say that you would like to be accompanied by Robert and me.

Agree? *No - I can't have two. But I should have thought you ought*

my letter. etc. I think it is more important for us. It is more important for us.