

C. PM TOURS :

Paris, Jan 84

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Susan

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO PARIS

We agreed that I would let you have an outline of our requirements for the Paris visit which you can discuss with Sir John Fretwell on the evening before you see M. Attali. We shall also be able to have a word about them if necessary at your meeting with Sir Antony Acland on Monday.

I apologise for the relative unimportance of what follows. It all illustrates that it would be very much better if the Elysee would work properly with our Embassy on arrangements for the visit. I should also emphasise that there is really no substitute for a channel between the two since, even if some of the requirements are sorted out during your visit to Paris, there are bound to be other points to put to the French between then and the Prime Minister's visit.

The most immediate question is the announcement of the visit. I attach a copy of my letter of 11 January to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the basis of which Sir John Fretwell received his instructions. You will see that the Prime Minister has given her personal attention to this and I very much hope that we can secure French agreement to what she wants. She is most disinclined to surround this visit with unnecessary mystery which would certainly make the presentation of it here much more difficult.

The UK party will consist of the Prime Minister, myself, a detective, a Duty Clerk, a Personal Assistant and an interpreter.

Apart from the interpreter, who will arrive separately, we shall reach Villacoublay Airport at 11.30 a.m. local time. The Embassy will need to make suitable transport arrangements with the French. I have noted from your minute of 11 January that M. Attali has said that he will come to the Airport to meet the Prime Minister and escort her to the Chateau de Marly. If we have to live with this, then so be it - but I think the Prime Minister would prefer that she could ride in a car with Sir John Fretwell and

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receive his last-minute advice. Our detective will need to be in the Prime Minister's car.

If I do not travel with the Prime Minister, I shall need a separate car immediately behind hers.

Then we shall need a car for the Duty Clerk, Personal Assistant, Security Officer and baggage. We would like to set up a Private Office in the Chateau de Marly to accommodate three people, with telephones and room for dictation and typing. A photocopying machine and an extra electric typewriter should be provided. A communications engineer from the British Embassy will need to visit this office in advance to set up a direct telephone link with London and instal other communication facilities.

A security officer from the British Embassy will also be on hand in the Private Office during the visit.

Cars will also need to be provided for the return of the UK party to Villacoublay Airport.

I very much hope that we can get all this back into the professional hands of the Embassy and the Protocol Department at the FCO who always serve us so well - otherwise the chances of something going wrong will be seriously increased.

A. J. COLES

13 January 1984