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RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE  
PRESIDENT OF FRANCE AT 1315 HOURS ON MONDAY 23 JANUARY 1984  
AT THE CHATEAU DE MARLY

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Present:

Prime Minister  
Mr. Coles

President Mitterrand  
M. Attali

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President Mitterrand opened the discussion by referring to the recent incident involving British lorry drivers in France. The Prime Minister said that she was very grateful for the firm action which had been taken. The British media had portrayed the British lorry drivers as hostages. President Mitterrand said that it had been a deplorable incident. The French farmers behaved rather frequently in this way. Spanish lorries taking vegetables and fruit to Germany via France were sometimes stopped and burnt. Last week 150 farmers had burnt a prefecture building in Brittany during the night. This kind of person would not move with the times. The Prime Minister commented that the farmers expected a guaranteed market regardless of circumstances. President Mitterrand agreed - the farmers sought both protection and competition and they could not have both. The Prime Minister said that British farmers were now assuming that there would be changes in the CAP. They were expecting lower prices and guaranteed thresholds. She had to point out to them that those who worked in industry did not receive the same benefits as those in the agricultural sector.

President Mitterrand said that the next two months would be busy. If the European Community did not settle its differences in March, it would face a more difficult task in June. And if it did not settle them then, it would find it hard to reach a solution in the next few years. He wanted to safeguard the Common Market but it was difficult to get agreement in a community of ten. One obstacle was the habits adopted since the Luxembourg compromise had been negotiated. The Member States used their right of veto on matters of detail. This made things very difficult. He recalled

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that the Polish Diet had had to agree everything unanimously - and the Poland of that day did not survive. So the way ahead was difficult. But it should be possible to reconcile the positions. He suggested that the discussion should begin with the Lebanon and East/West relations and then return to Community issues.

The Prime Minister said that her chief worry about Lebanon was that as a result of a fresh terrorist incident pressure might build up in the United States which would lead to the withdrawal of American troops. This would leave other contributors in a very difficult position especially as we had taken the view that the MNF would continue to have a role so long as President Gemayel was seeking reconciliation and had a chance of succeeding. On 20 January she had discussed the situation with Mr. Rumsfeld. She had confirmed our support for the MNF, pointed out that if it simply withdrew the consequences for internal stability in the Lebanon could be grave but that it could not stay indefinitely. So it was vital to move the reconciliation process forward. However, this process seemed to be stuck because Syria was taking the view that it would not permit reconciliation unless the 17 May agreement was abrogated. She felt that there should be a contingency plan for United Nations troops to replace the MNF but that required a request from President Gemayel and he saw more advantage in the MNF than in a UN force. The critical question was how to deal with Syria which could remain powerful simply by doing nothing.

President Mitterrand observed that if the impression were created that the MNF was likely to depart, all Syria had to do was wait. If it were convinced that the MNF would leave by, say, the end of the year, then it would not negotiate. If Western troops left Lebanon in present circumstances, the West would have failed dramatically. So we should aim to leave only on precise conditions (and should avoid implying in public that we would leave). The conditions were - the creation of a national coalition Government and the replacement of the MNF by a United Nations force. In addition, it was necessary to continue to train and arm the Lebanese army. Indeed, this was the principal task remaining but

it did not require the presence of a large number of troops. After recalling the original mandate of the MNF, the President explained that France had helped with the exchange of prisoners and had also helped to secure the departure of the Palestinians from Northern Lebanon. These were useful steps but they were marginal - France had not entered the Lebanon for such purposes. Now there was no precise task except to help President Gemayel assemble an adequate army. But that did not need 1,500 French soldiers in Beirut - 200 would be enough.

Syria would not move until President Gemayel denounced the 17 May agreement. Working through Jumblatt, Asad could stop any coalition Government coming into power. Therefore, so long as there was the Lebanese/Israeli agreement, there would be no agreement in the Lebanon. Mr. Shultz continued to think that the 17 May agreement was a masterpiece - the French thought it was foolish.

The Prime Minister said that the Americans believed that Israel was in considerable difficulty and would have to withdraw its troops from the coastal area (they would not move from the Syrian border). But was Syria using the 17 May agreement merely as a tactic or could it be persuaded to change its position and allow Jumblatt to negotiate with Gemayel? She understood that the Lebanese Government was concerned at the passage of arms and men from the Shouf into Southern Beirut and feared that this would lead to fresh trouble in the city. If there was another bad incident, for example against the US ships off the Lebanese coast, and if American public opinion demanded the departure of US troops during the US election campaign, France and the UK who took a similar view on the Lebanon might be isolated. Both M. Cheysson and Sir Geoffrey Howe were exploring the conditions for replacing the MNF with UN troops. Our own force was patrolling regularly and guarded the ceasefire talks. It was not behind barricades. But it was isolated and conspicuous. She accepted the President's analysis of the situation but believed that there must be a contingency plan in case Western public opinion changed rapidly. We needed to arrange MNF withdrawal in a specified time. If the circumstances which she

envisaged arose, the four would need to seek UN involvement - and it must be understood that in such circumstances President Gemayel would make the necessary request to the UN Secretary-General. We needed also to think about the situation which would arise if President Gemayel resigned.

President Mitterrand said that he had told President Gemayel that he must have no illusion that the MNF could keep him in power. It could help him but it would not be sufficient for this purpose. Perhaps part of Beirut could be neutralised under a United Nations presence while Britain and France helped to train the Lebanese army. Gemayel had 35,000 men. If he had 60,000 this would be a significant force. France was prepared to continue to train the Lebanese army whatever the diplomatic outcome.

The French had spoken to Gromyko about a UN force. The Russian position appeared to be more open than they had imagined. The Soviet Union did not want Syria to drag them too far in the Lebanese situation. But Moscow would obviously draw any benefit it could from the situation and would not accept any agreement until it obtained some concession from the United States. At present everything was blocked. Eighty-three French lives had been lost and French public opinion was uncertain. This would not change his resolve to avoid a hasty departure. He agreed that negotiations between the four MNF contributors were absolutely indispensable.

The Prime Minister said that it all came back to the question of how to influence Asad. He enjoyed enormous power in the present impasse. Would he, or the United States, or Israel show flexibility on the 17 May agreement? President Mitterrand repeated that it was very dangerous for the United States to give the impression that the MNF might depart - for Syria would then just wait. If the MNF simply left the Lebanon, Syria would have gained a political victory. But there was a certain lack of trust between Syria and the Soviet Union. Another possible new element was Asad's concern about the religious revolution inspired by Iran. Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria were also worried about Islamic fundamentalism. This worry could be a very positive element. Asad did not want a war, either a world or a local war, but he

wanted to win without moving. He may have been behind some of the earlier assassinations but the present wave of assassination was causing him concern. If we could get away from the 17 May agreement, the door could be unlocked. It was not certain that Israel wanted to maintain the agreement. Their real interest lay in the formation in the Lebanon of a coalition Government and a lasting truce.

The Prime Minister said that Mr. Shultz was not as wedded to the 17 May agreement as we had once thought. He felt it should be set aside, though not abrogated, and he would not allow his parentage of the agreement to dominate his thinking. She had understood from Mr. Shultz that the United States had put pressure on Israel both to facilitate the return of the Jordanian Parliament and not to obstruct the departure of Palestinians from Tripoli. This showed that the United States could put pressure on Israel when it impeded progress.

President Mitterrand said that we should set our sights strictly on the replacement of the MNF by a UN force and should put pressure on President Gemayel to request this. Gemayel was a close personal friend but his Government was not representative. France could not stay in the Lebanon just to protect the Maronites, who were themselves divided. France was not the enemy of the Arabs but the latter criticised it for keeping Gemayel in place. He knew Jumblatt well - he was unpredictable and a lesser man than his father. The latter had been assassinated by the Syrians and Jumblatt now felt this could happen to him.

The Prime Minister raised the wider Arab/Israel problem. It was difficult to judge the consequences of the recall of the Jordanian Parliament. Would this provide an alternative voice for the Palestinians? Or would Arafat still insist on keeping the PLO label? Hussein seemed to have given himself a new freedom of movement. He could negotiate with the United States either with Arafat or without him. We constantly told the United States that they must ensure the future of Jordan and, where necessary in that connection, must restrain Israel. There was little movement on the fundamental Arab/Israeli problem.

President Mitterrand said that in general, things were going badly in that respect. Israel was profiting, almost cynically, from Arab divisions. This could be a shrewd policy for five years but not for ten. The Prime Minister said that she was encouraged by the signs of a new moderate grouping among the Arabs. If Egypt were to come to lead this group, this would be a very positive development. President Mitterrand agreed. Who were the real extremists? Qadhafi certainly. Asad only for tactical reasons. Not Chadli - he was not a moderate but he was moving in that direction. The extremists were losing ground. But within many Arab countries there was domestic disintegration because of the fundamentalist movement. We must count on Egypt. Egypt and Iraq were the two strongest military powers in the Middle East. Iraq had other preoccupations. So Egypt must re-enter the scene. The Prime Minister commented that there was unlikely to be much movement on the Arab/Israel problem during a U.S. election year.

President Mitterrand said that a UN force should be brought into the Lebanon within three months. French troops would stay in the Lebanon as long as necessary but the aim should be to secure a UN force within three months. The closer we got to the US election date, the more paralysed Washington would be. The Prime Minister noted President Mitterrand's aim but commented that it would require agreement among the four contributors to bring pressure to bear on Gemayel. There would then be the problem of the Soviet attitude in the UN Security Council but she wondered whether the Russians would in fact veto a suitable resolution. President Mitterrand commented that he did not believe that the Russians had made up their mind to veto a UN force. They were getting worried about the situation.

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The Prime Minister asked what view the President took of the present situation in the Soviet Union. The Russians seemed to be in difficulties. Their tactic over INF deployment had failed and they had as yet developed no new tactic. Andropov was said to be in charge, but there was uncertainty over his position. She doubted whether the Soviet Union wanted a new destabilising factor in the Middle East now. President Mitterrand said that there were signs that Andropov would re-appear publicly shortly. He believed Andropov was in good shape intellectually but not physically. Meanwhile, we needed to watch the Soviet military. The Prime Minister commented that Andropov and Ustinov had appeared to work very closely to secure Andropov's succession to Brezhnev. President Mitterrand commented that it was his impression that Ustinov was now protecting Andropov's authority. In the Soviet Union, if you had the army and the police on your side, you were in no difficulty.

The Prime Minister said that there were recent reports that internal Soviet propaganda was creating a new fear of war in the Soviet people. There was apparently a good deal of television propaganda about the danger of war with the Soviet Union, and even some of the dissidents were worried. She had raised this matter with Mr. Shultz who thought that this propangada was now counter-productive in that the regime, having awakened the peoples fears, was having to backtrack. She believed that both France and Britain had simultaneously come to the conclusion that we must talk to the Soviet leadership. The purpose was not to change the Soviet system, which was too rigid, but to prevent errors owing to miscalculation. She would like younger members of the Politburo to visit the West. Was the President thinking of visiting Moscow? President Mitterrand replied that if Mr. Adropov invited him during 1984, he thought it would be a good idea to accept. He had no doubt that in present circumstances Adropov would seek to talk with the United

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Kingdom and France. Germany was of little interest to him; It could produce promises and smiles, but had no freedom of movement vis-a-vis the United States. By contrast, France and Britain had nuclear weapons, and they had prevented the inclusion of their deterrent in the INF negotiations. The Russians had to talk to someone. There were a few signs of Soviet willingness to engage in a dialogue. Mr. Arkhipov would visit Paris next week, and he would himself receive him. The Russians were behaving in a friendly way in various Franco/Soviet Committees. If the same phenomenon was not yet apparent in Britain, it soon would be. The Prime Minister commented that the signs of uncertainty which one saw in the Soviet Union must be worrying for the leadership. She believed that they would try to separate Europe and the United States. This would not succeed. But it was possible that the Russians would derive different impressions from talking to the United States and talking to the Europeans. The Americans tended to inject thoughts about the human rights situation in the Soviet Union and the possibility of changing the system. We would all like to see such changes, but we were likely to make more progress with the dialogue if we made it plain that we would defend our own society, but recognised that we would have to live with the Soviet system. President Mitterrand agreed. For France, the question of any other approach did not arise. France and the United Kingdom knew where Moscow was. The Russians were not sure that the Americans did.

The Prime Minister said that there was a tactical question - Were we more likely to obtain agreement on disarmament if we first tried to pursue a more general understanding? Or would such agreement emerge if we concentrated on work in the various fora and attempted to get the Russians back to the Conference table? President Mitterrand said that Moscow was watching the United States elections carefully. It calculated the President Reagan would want to please his electorate

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by talking of peace. So there would be no useful dialogue for some time. The Prime Minister said that she had welcomed President Reagan's speech. In making it, he had taken certain risks with his right wing (President Mitterrand interjected that they had no one other than Reagan to vote for). She believed that President Reagan genuinely wanted dialogue. She recalled that he had written in his own hand to Brezhnev. President Mitterrand commented that President Reagan and Brezhnev could have gotten together - they were the same type of man. But Andropov was different. The President said that he had talked to Brezhnev in 1975 for 75 minutes. He had got the impression then that Brezhnev was already very ill - he had several times asked his advisers in the President's hearing whether his illness was evident.

The Prime Minister asked how President Mitterrand viewed the Soviet internal situation. President Mitterrand said that the Russians did not want war. The economy was in a bad way. The army was of low standard. Russian memories of the last war were strong. The Soviet Union did not profit from war - but at present it did not profit from peace either. So he was convinced the Russians would look for an opening, at the best price available. They would get a better price in October/November when the United States election campaign would be coming to an end. So, the situation would be frozen till then. The Prime Minister commented that the Russians could benefit enormously from real peace. Their need for economic development was pressing. Since they had educated a whole society, the leadership would soon be faced with questions about the performance of the economy. But would they be able to depart from Communism sufficiently to allow people the necessary economic incentives? She doubted whether they could move away from the present rigid system. The next

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20 years in the Soviet Union would be fascinating.

President Mitterrand said that the French analysis was much the same. He told his friends that by the end of the century the Soviet empire would disintegrate. The Russian people had developed tastes for Western art and for consumer products, and could not be prevented by force from seeking these things. Tensions would develop and would make themselves felt in other Communist countries. He agreed with the Prime Minister that Andropov was unlikely to make the necessary changes towards a freer society. Yet such changes were inevitable. Even the Soviet Army would have to open out. But when Eastern Europe began to disintegrate, the world security situation would be very worrying, for the Soviet armed forces would try to save the situation.

The Prime Minister enquired about the President's acquaintance with Hungary. President Mitterrand said that he had visited Hungary and had met Kadar four times. Hungary was a very interesting experience - within limits. There were no political prisoners in the country, but there appeared to be internal tensions at present. The Hungarian people had, perhaps, profited too much from the relative freedom of the Hungarian economy, and the regime was having to counter this. Kadar had explained to him that Hungary had always been ruled by an imperial power. The Russian army in Hungary was stronger than the Hungarian army. So, Kadar continued, he could not, like Ceaucescu, have an independent foreign policy. He made up for this with a freer domestic policy. Kadar did not forget that he had been imprisoned by his Communist comrades. Andropov had a very high opinion of Kadar. The latter and the Bulgarian leader were the two East Europeans with most influence in Moscow. The Prime Minister asked whether Kadar could influence Andropov towards a better East/West relationship. President Mitterrand said that he could, particularly because he wished to see such a development.

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President Mitterrand then asked what was to be done about the European Community. The Prime Minister said that she believed that agreement could be reached provided people recognised that we could not carry on as in the past. She had looked again at the Treaty of Rome. The British objectives required no amendment to the Treaty. The latter referred to "the rational development of agricultural production" and the need to ensure that supplies reached consumers at reasonable prices. The Treaty also referred to the objective of reducing the differences existing between the various regions. It had never foreseen the enormous agricultural surpluses that now existed.

With regard to the budget, the original arrangement for a Community of six no longer worked. The Community had departed from it in 1970. A Community of twelve could not carry on with open-ended agricultural prices nor with the existing budgetary arrangements. If everybody realised that, we could arrive at an arrangement which would suit a Community of twelve. But if we tried to carry on as before, acute differences would arise.

President Mitterrand said that the Prime Minister was the first EC leader whom he had met since he had taken over the Presidency. On 2 February, he would meet Chancellor Kohl and in the following week he would go to the Netherlands. So the Prime Minister was the first - she was not the most difficult though he sometimes thought she perhaps was. But he could reach an understanding with her quickly. It was not necessary to have a complicated negotiation. The problem of budgetary burdens could be solved if we used three means. First, there should be a better budgetary arrangement. We should accept that the EC budget would not increase more quickly than national budgets. That would help Britain and he could accept that approach. So we should decide on a certain rate of growth which would be clearly smaller than the current rate. When national budgets were increasing at a relatively slow rate it was not reasonable that the EC budget should increase by 20 per cent a year.

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Secondly, if Britain, Germany and France could reach an agreement on the control of non-obligatory expenditure, overall expenditure could be further reduced. The third way of reducing the burden was through refunds.

By adopting the first two of the three approaches he had mentioned, we could arrive at reasonable contributions and the British problem would be much smaller. He did not wish to see this issue in terms of the Prime Minister getting a refund of two-thirds or him preventing her getting it. He believed that the basis for calculating refunds over the last few years had been unsatisfactory - and had been worked out by a very able British official in the Commission.

There were other questions. There was enlargement, which would cost money. There was the problem of MCAs but that was not a difficulty between France and Britain; and there was the difficulty about milk. But it would be good to agree as quickly as possible on a means of reducing contributions by combining the three approaches he had mentioned.

The Prime Minister had formed the impression at Athens that he had gone back on the proposals of M. Delors. This was not in fact the case. He was quite prepared to work with Britain in the direction of those proposals. One should not take exaggerated steps but between the last increase of 6 per cent in the French budget and the 20 per cent increase in the Community budget, it should be possible to find a solution.

The Prime Minister said that her approach was more fundamental. She agreed that there must be a strict overall financial guideline. This must relate to all parts of the budget whether obligatory or non-obligatory. And it was vital to incorporate it in the budgetary procedures. A political aspiration was not enough. But even if that was done, there would be a difficulty each year in agreeing upon the guideline. France and Britain might wish to contain expenditure but others would wish to increase it. So there would still be a fight each year. She repeated that it was essential that the guideline be contained in the budgetary procedures.

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As to the financing of EC expenditure, her interest lay in how much Britain transferred to the Community and how much it received - these two factors determined our net contribution. The present system derived from the own resources decision of 1970. That system was not inherent in the Treaty and it had given rise to great inequities in the distribution of the burden. Most member states were seeking a change to the 1 per cent VAT provision contained in the own resources decision. If there was no change, the problem of inequity would remain. It was that problem which had led to ad hoc negotiations. Any change in the own resources decision would have to be approved by national Parliaments. Our position was that if there was to be an increase in the VAT contribution, then as part of the system there must be a more equitable formula. President Mitterrand commented that that was the key. Continuing, the Prime Minister said that we must move from an ad hoc system to a formula which was part and parcel of the new system, which distributed the expenditure burden more fairly, and was determined by ability to pay according to relative GDP. We hoped that our GDP would increase but so long as it was smaller than that of other states we should pay less than they.

Her approach, therefore, was more fundamental than that of President Mitterrand. The old 1970 system was an ad hoc one. Under the new system Germany would still pay much more than anyone else. But it was prepared to do so and should do so. Germany simply sought a limit for its contribution. The United Kingdom and France would come next. It would be possible so to arrange things that in the first year of the new system both countries would pay about the same - perhaps some 500 to 600 ecu's. The price for increasing VAT was an equitable sharing of the burden. Ad hoc-ery would be abandoned and would be replaced by a true system.

There would have to be changes to the CAP if agricultural expenditure was to be constrained. We would need guaranteed thresholds and we could not have a multiplicity of exemptions to the rules - as Ireland, Italy and Greece had sought with regard to milk at Athens.

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She knew that the President was interested in an oil and fats tax. We should continue to contest this and in doing so would be conforming with the Treaty. The President felt that Europe should limit imports of corn gluten. We would be prepared to talk very seriously to the United States about the possibility of limiting imports to their past levels. If we went any further, we should be in trouble with the GATT.

So, her requirements were a strict financial guideline embodied in the budgetary procedures and affecting both obligatory and non-obligatory expenditure, and a new budgetary system to be contained in a new own resources decision.

She had regarded the Athens Council as a necessary forum for getting this message across. She did not know whether it had yet been understood. Chancellor Kohl thought as she did in certain respects and Mr. Lubbers had similar views. Mr. Schluter had also been realistic on some agricultural matters. With regard to MCAs, she did not want any change to be the occasion for substantial increases in prices. So a change must take place over an agreed period of time.

President Mitterrand said that he was prepared to examine, as at Athens, the problem of budgetary limits. The agricultural budget was only part of that problem. There had been excesses which must be controlled. The Prime Minister wanted the new system to be contained in the financing procedures. The Prime Minister said that it should be incorporated in the budgetary procedures, not necessarily in the Treaty.

Continuing, President Mitterrand said that he understood that, with regard to budget refunds, the Prime Minister wished the key to be redefined. His mind was not closed to that. But he did not want France to become the victim of these arrangements. He was not opposed to a new system for a certain number of years. Nor was he opposed to a system which differed from that of 1970. But there were certain matters which could create difficult

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internal problems for France. If milk production was reduced in one year to 97m tonnes, this would imply a 1½m tonne reduction for France. This would create great difficulty and thus the target should be reached over several financial years. There might be surpluses for another two or three years. They could not be removed at once. It would also be necessary to consider the reference year - he indicated that he favoured 1981. The question of surpluses could be looked at but changes would have to be paid for. One idea, coming from the Commission not from France, had been that of an oil and fats tax. He did not insist on that device if money could be found from an alternative source. There would be merit in tackling the corn gluten problem - it was not reasonable that European pigs should be fed pretty well exclusively by these American products.

On the handling of the negotiations, he believed that we should start, not with a blank page, but with what had been agreed at Athens. He would send his new Minister to London to determine what elements in the Athens package should be maintained. The Prime Minister observed that nothing had been agreed at Athens. President Mitterrand recognised that there had been no formal agreement. But surely progress had been made on some points. Agreement was not far away at Athens. The Prime Minister said that compared with Stuttgart, there had been little progress - and some of the Stuttgart arrangements had been overturned. President Mitterrand said that he did not altogether agree. There had been a certain misunderstanding on the UK budget problem (he implied that this had been due to confusion between the general problem of EC expenditure and the question of refunds). The Prime Minister said that there had been disagreement on milk, where everyone wanted derogations, on MCAs, on the question of a strict financial guideline and on the budgetary burden. President Mitterrand said that he had no wish to quarrel about these matters. He had wanted to save time for he felt that the Community had been close to agreement at Athens. The Prime Minister said that it was the fundamental questions that had not been settled there. President Mitterrand

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said that he was not opposed to dealing with those matters first. Perhaps Mr. Papandreou should have followed this course. He himself considered that the European Community was badly managed. France had a greater interest than Britain in the agricultural arrangements but it wanted the Community to work. He would not ask for absurd concessions nor would he ask his partners to pay for them. The Prime Minister said that if we did not get to grips with the fundamentals, then the March Council would be a failure. She would see M. Dumas if he came to London. But she was clear on her conditions for changing the own resources system. She was clear on the need for strict financial guidelines and their incorporation in the budgetary procedures. She also had agricultural interests to protect. And we both had international trading obligations. The preamble of the Treaty referred to the aim of reducing barriers to world trade.

President Mitterrand said that the Irish must be brought to realise that they were mainly responsible for the milk surplus. This was not a fundamental matter but it was important. He was ready to reflect on the British position and consider the approach which the Prime Minister had outlined. He wanted things to be clear and sufficiently durable to avoid annual quarrels. In 1981 there had been too much concentration on the British problem. So he had begun his talk with the Prime Minister by outlining his approach to dealing with the financial burden in all fields. The aim was to be clear as to how much each contributed and that each contribution was fair. Discussion in terms of the British problem was to be avoided. The Prime Minister said that she was glad that the President would consider what she had said because it was a new and fundamental approach which Germany also supported. President Mitterrand said that he would reflect in those terms. He would see Chancellor Kohl and would send M. Dumas to London. The latter was a friend of the United Kingdom which was one reason why he had been chosen. The Prime Minister repeated that she would receive M. Dumas. It was important to try to get an understanding at the level of Heads of State and

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Government before the next Council. President Mitterrand said that the conclusion he drew from the exchange was that he would examine the Prime Minister's proposals profoundly and in the next few days would send her a confidential reaction to them.

As the Prime Minister was leaving, President Mitterrand suggested that he should pay an informal, half-day, visit to London before the end of February to continue the discussion. The Prime Minister said that he would be welcome.

It was agreed that the press should be told no more than that the President and the Prime Minister had discussed Community questions, East/West relations and the Middle East.

The discussion ended at 3.20 p.m.

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23 January 1984

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Pres. Mitterrand  
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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

23 January 1984

*Mr Brian,*

VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER TO PARIS

The Prime Minister visited Paris today for talks and lunch with President Mitterrand. I enclose a copy of the record.

We shall be taking action separately about the plan for President Mitterrand to visit London before the end of February - and shall also be arranging a time for M. Dumas to call on the Prime Minister.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to John Kerr (HM Treasury), Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence), Robert Lawson (MAFF) and Richard Hatfield.

The record should be closely protected and not further distributed except where this is operationally essential. Since the Elysee attach great importance to the confidentiality of talks at this level, no reference to the contents of the talks should be made in conversation with French representatives.

*Your ever*

*John Major*

Brian Fall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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