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CONFIDENTIAL FILING

Policy towards Bilateral Summits

FOREIGN POLICY

March 1988

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
	28.3.88						
	<u>27.5.88</u>						
	30.6.88						
	22.1.88						
	4/3/89						
	18/4/89						
PREM 19/2689							



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*SIR ROBIN BUTLERMISC 76

I have seen Patrick Wright's letter of 23 March to you about briefs for bilateral summits.

I have spoken to the Prime Minister about the format for briefs on foreign affairs and EC subjects. Her view now is that the existing format should continue to be used for briefs for Economic Summits, for European Councils and for CHOGMs. But for bilateral summits and for all other meetings with individual Heads of State or Government, a letter summarising the main issues to be covered, our aims and the arguments we can deploy to secure them will suffice. If in the case of bilateral summits this can more easily and succinctly be achieved in the form of a single steering brief, that is acceptable.

I believe that this should simplify the task of briefing quite considerably.

I am copying this minute to Patrick Wright.

C.D.P.

Charles Powell
18 April 1989

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KK

PRIME MINISTER

BRIEFING ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Some years back we introduced a new format for your briefing for foreign affairs meetings. This set out

- our objectives
- their objectives
- our arguments
- their arguments
- our counter-arguments
- background.

My impression is that you have found this quite useful for major international meetings such as European Councils and Economic Summits, but unnecessarily elaborate for ordinary talks with individual heads of government or bilateral summits. In practice, I have encouraged the FCO to do straightforward letters for meetings of this sort, summarising the latest information about the country and the main current issues.

The question now is whether we should formalise this arrangement. That would seem to me quite sensible. After ten years, you tend to know an awful lot more about most foreign leaders, their countries and their problems than the FCO do. I suggest therefore that we maintain the formal briefs for major international meetings only, and use briefing-by-letter for other occasions. I will continue to supplement them with covering notes.

Agree?

CDP

Yes

CHARLES POWELL

17 April 1989

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File

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FILE

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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

MISC 76

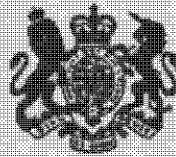
I have seen a copy of your letter of 13 March to Patrick Wright proposing that in future briefs for bilateral summits should be co-ordinated by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. I am content with this.

I am copying this minute to Patrick Wright.

C. D. POWELL
14 March 1989

RESTRICTED

KK



CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS

01-270 0101

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

Sir Robin Butler KCB CVO

Ref. A089/707

13 March 1989

My dear Patrick,

MISC 76

The recent Anglo-German and Anglo-French Summits have provided the opportunity to review the role of MISC 76, and in particular its responsibility for clearing bilateral Summit Steering Briefs.

In the period since MISC 76 was set up, the case for undertaking a line by line examination of such briefs seems to me to have diminished. The Prime Minister is increasingly familiar with the issues and the pattern of the briefing is by now well established. Unless therefore you or Charles Powell (to whom I am copying this letter) see objection (or wish to suggest any significant changes to the briefing process), I propose that in future the briefs for Bilateral Summits should be co-ordinated by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and sent directly to No 10.

I do not propose, however, disbanding MISC 76. It is engaged at present on reviewing progress in our relations with France and the Federal Republic of Germany over the last year, and will be available to co-ordinate work on any particular aspect of those relations. It may also be useful in examining our relations with other Community countries when called upon to do so, as it did last year in the case of Spain. It will therefore continue to be available as required but no longer involve itself in clearing briefs.

Yours ever,

Sir Patrick Wright KCMG
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Robin

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*cc PS/ Sir J Huntwell
The Bayne
Mr Boyd
The Goublen
7a 020/4 23/ia*

YOUR TELNO 423: ANGLO-FRENCH SUMMIT.

1. THE QUAI HAVE JUST CONFIRMED THAT THE ELYSEE HAVE AGREED TO 27 FEBRUARY FOR THE ANGLO-FRENCH SUMMIT, TO BE HELD IN PARIS.

FERGUSSON

YYYY

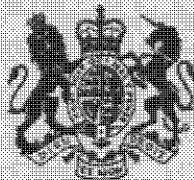
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PS/PUS
MR RATFORD
MR KERR

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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

30 June 1988

27/2/89
ANGLO-FRENCH AND ANGLO-GERMAN SUMMITS

Your letter of 24 June suggested we should begin to look for dates for Anglo-French and Anglo-German Summits early next year. We have identified the following dates which could be put to either the French or Germans: 23 or 27 January, 17 or 20 February, 27 February or 3 March and 10 March. You might like to carry out some soundings quite soon to see whether these dates are acceptable. My recollection is that it is the Germans' turn to come here and our turn to go to France.

I will think further about the question of the possible sites outside London.

(C. D. POWELL)

Lyn Parker, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

MR. POWELL

ANGLO-FRENCH AND ANGLO-GERMAN SUMMITS NEXT YEAR

I have pencilled in the following dates:

Friday 6 or Monday 9 January

Monday 23 or Friday 27 January

Friday 17 or Monday 20 February

Monday 27 February or Friday 3 March

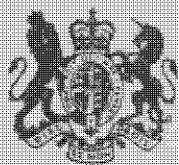
Friday 10 March

Please will you let me know which dates are chosen.

Tessa

Tessa Gaisman

29 June 1988



10 DOWNING STREET

Tessa

We need to

look for data —

Monday or Friday —

for the year

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July - Port limits.

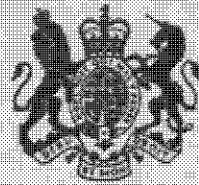
In effect we are

talking about

Jan. / Feb / March next year.

Can you let me have
some suggestions. Oh

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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

27 May 1988

ANGLO/FRENCH AND ANGLO/GERMAN SUMMITS

Thank you for your letter of 26 May about the future of Anglo/French and Anglo/German Summits.

First, on the specific question of the Prime Minister's meeting with Chancellor Kohl at Chequers on 9 July: the Prime Minister agrees that we should arrange an informal picture session for the media. Given the restrictions imposed by the Chequers Trust, this cannot be in the house. But assuming that the weather is fine, we might arrange for the Prime Minister and the Chancellor to be photographed walking in the Chequers garden. I will ask our Press Office to be in touch with you about the details of this.

Second, on the wider question of the Summits, we do certainly face diary problems in arranging meetings in the autumn, not least because the Parliamentary timetable is particularly difficult to predict and there are other possible meetings and visits to consider. It may be that we shall have to settle for further informal meetings at Head of Government level. But the Prime Minister agrees that we should continue to hold more formal Summits on occasion and she is content with the Foreign Secretary's suggestions in your letter in making these less cumbersome. She would also be prepared to consider holding them outside London. You may like to let me have two or three specific suggestions for sites for such meetings in the future.

CHARLES POWELL

Lyn Parker, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

24 June 1988

Dear Charles,

Anglo-French and Anglo-German Summits

Thank you for your letter of 27 May about summits with France and Germany, in which you asked for specific suggestions for sites outside London.

In recent years we have had a summit with the Italians in Florence and informal meetings with the French in Canterbury, Lille and Caen. We see a number of advantages in holding the next summit with the Germans outside London:

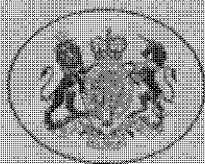
- it would increase the sense that this was not just a routine event;
- it would provide a good setting for publicity and would encourage media interest;
- it would offset our intention to cut out the plenary session;
- it would be readily understood by leaders of a federal state.

We envisage that the site should combine an attractive historical setting with modern prosperity and growth, so that Chancellor Kohl and the attendant press could see both aspects of Britain. Among the places we think could meet that requirement are Bristol, Cardiff, Oxford, Edinburgh, Norwich, York and Winchester. (We would rather reserve Cambridge for a possible visit in 1990 for the 40th Königswinter conference.) All these cities are twinned with cities in the Federal Republic - Hanover, Stuttgart, Bonn, Munich, Koblenz, Münster and Giessen respectively. It is difficult to link a summit to a possible Anglo-German event, when we are still unclear about timing, but in all these cities it might be possible at least to combine the summit with some contact with local businessmen in the context of 1992 or perhaps local children/students learning German.

We have looked for Anglo-German joint ventures or collaborative industrial projects, but most of these are rather small. Apart from Airbus the most significant is the EFA; work on it in Britain is concentrated at Warton near Preston.

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If any of these ideas appeal to the Prime Minister, we shall have to do more investigation of security and other aspects. Meanwhile, given the pressures on diaries, it does not seem too soon to begin looking for dates. Would you be able to identify some, perhaps early next year, which you could authorise us to put to the Germans?

Yours ever, L Parker

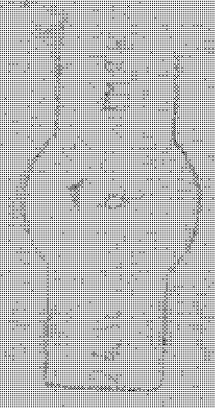
(L Parker)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

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Figure 2. Pol. Pol. (methyl) Glutamate

Structure



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PRIME MINISTER

cc Mr. B. Ingham

ANGLO-FRENCH AND ANGLO-GERMAN SUMMITS

I wrote a couple of months ago to the Foreign Office putting the question whether bilateral summits were really worthwhile. I said that in your view they tended to be ponderous and contrived and you would like alternatives to be looked at. One possibility would be a commitment to regular informal meetings and consultations at Head of Government level of the sort which you will be having with President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl over the next month.

The Foreign Secretary has now replied on a number of separate aspects:

- He hopes that you will do something at your meeting with Chancellor Kohl at Chequers on 9 July to underline your good relations with him. Kohl is sensitive to criticism in the British press about him and speculation that the two of you do not get on. The Foreign Secretary suggests an informal photo/TV opportunity. The rules at Chequers make this difficult. But if the weather is fine you might consider taking a walk across the lawn for the media's benefit.

Agree?

Yes not

- The Foreign Secretary hopes you will continue with more formal summit meetings in the autumn (and we do now have a date for the Germans in October). But he suggests that they could be made less cumbersome by limiting the number of Ministers to three or four, by dispensing with the plenary session and substituting a Ministers only lunch, and by holding the summits outside London on occasion. The

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purpose would be to make the meetings more intimate and businesslike without removing all the symbolism of a summit.

If you agree with these suggestions the Foreign Secretary recommends that you propose the new format to Chancellor Kohl in July.

Content to proceed on this basis?

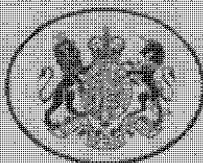
CDP

CDP

26 May 1988

KAYAEI

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

CONFIDENTIAL London SW1A 2AH

26 May 1988

cc PE

CS

Dear Charles,

Anglo-French and Anglo-German Summits

Thank you for your letter of 11 May ^{at 11.00} high-level meetings with the French and German Governments.

The meetings with President Mitterrand on 10 June and with Chancellor Kohl on 9 July will come at the beginning of a period offering particular opportunities. Assuming that the Socialist Party do well in the legislative elections, we seem set for a period of stable government in France after the tensions of cohabitation. In Bonn the coalition fared badly in the Schleswig-Holstein election on 8 May; but, barring accidents, and with the exception of Berlin which the CDU will win, there should now be a gap in Land elections until 1990. We may therefore hope to deepen our co-operation with both countries both in the Community and in the Alliance during the change of US Administration.

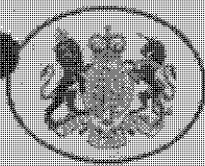
High-level contacts will have a key role to play. We have replied separately to your letter of 18 May on possible initiatives at the meeting with President Mitterrand. With the Germans too, the 9 July meeting at Chequers is an opportunity to pursue new proposals for joint action and to establish a new climate. We are for example looking with MOD at some ideas in the defence field. The Foreign Secretary hopes also that the Prime Minister and Chancellor might allow an informal photo/TV opportunity at Chequers. Chancellor Kohl is clearly sensitive to the British media criticism of himself and speculation about his relationship with the Prime Minister.

Looking further ahead, we believe that in order to keep up the momentum there is a strong case for further bilateral meetings in the autumn with both President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl. Diary considerations may in the end require that these to be informal and brief; but more formal summit meetings would have greater impact, particularly with the Germans, with whom our last summit was in September 1986.

The Foreign Secretary makes this recommendation after reflecting carefully on the issues raised in your letter of 28 March to Tony Galsworthy. As you said, our European partners attach importance to summits. They see them as marking a

/higher

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higher stage in bilateral relationships. This is reflected in the media, even though coverage of individual summits is often disappointing. And the perception of the personal relations at the top and of the atmosphere engendered at summit meetings tends to influence judgements at all levels of government on what weight to give each partner's view in forming policy. We have been unable to devise an arrangement which would achieve the same symbolism and have the same effect on underlying perceptions of our status within Europe.

The Foreign Secretary does not therefore believe that it would be in our interest to dispense with summits altogether; but we can and should try to make them more productive. The plenary sessions have become particularly cumbersome and stilted. We propose therefore that for the next Anglo-German summit, at which we shall be the hosts, we suggest to the Germans that:-

- we limit the number of Ministers to the minimum. Depending on the topical issue(s) at the time, that might for example mean only Foreign, Defence and perhaps Finance Ministers.

- this would in turn reduce the need for the formal plenary session. The same result could be achieved more informally through discussion at a Ministers-only lunch.

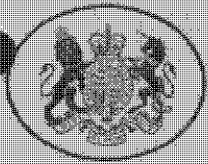
- the basic format would therefore be: bilateral discussion between Ministers, lunch and press conference.

- the special nature of the event could be emphasized by holding it outside London. If the timing permitted we would aim to combine it with a newsworthy Anglo-German event. Even if not, a joint visit to a major British city would attract more interest than another meeting in Lancaster House or even No 10.

- our overall aim would be to make the summit more intimate and businesslike without diminishing its importance.

We believe that there would at one stage have been resistance on the German side to dropping the plenary, which they saw as a kind of joint Cabinet session. There are now signs that Chancellor Kohl himself has taken on board the Prime Minister's preference for one-to-one informal discussion. The Foreign Secretary believes therefore that this would be a good moment to try to achieve change. If we succeeded with the Germans, we could make a similar approach to the French (although it is their turn to be hosts). As long as cohabitation is out of the way, President Mitterrand might be able and willing to accept greater informality.

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I should be grateful to know the Prime Minister's reaction to this general approach.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

longer, L Parker

(L Parker)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

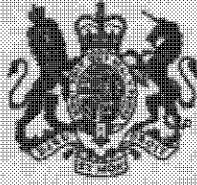
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Meeting Record

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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

11 May 1988

ANGLO-FRENCH AND ANGLO-GERMAN SUMMITS

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary had a word this afternoon about future high level meetings with the French and German Governments.

It was noted that President Mitterrand had suggested that he and the Prime Minister might meet shortly. I have proposed to the French that the Prime Minister might go to Paris on 10 June which would of course be an opportunity for her to meet both President Mitterrand and Prime Minister Rocard. We are waiting for a reply which is promised by the end of the week. Chancellor Kohl is to visit Chequers on 9 July.

The Foreign Secretary hoped that it would be possible to find dates later in the year for more formal summits, although an effort should be made to reduce the number of Ministers on each side attending these meetings to make them less cumbersome. We might also look for possible sites for the meetings outside London. The Prime Minister said that she would be willing to consider proposals on this.

(C.D. POWELL)

Lyn Parker, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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MJRCEL



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

FCS dealt with this
at his bilateral
with PM - 27/4/88

bet FC

From the Private Secretary

28 March 1988

BILATERAL SUMMITS

The Prime Minister has recently asked whether our bilateral Summits with the French, German and Italian Governments are really worthwhile. We seem to have great difficulty in finding convenient dates and are now far away from the original target of holding such meetings every six months (indeed if the Germans accept the October dates which we have proposed, it will mean a two year gap since the last formal Summit). Moreover, in the Prime Minister's experience, the Summits tend to be ponderous and contrived occasions in which only a limited amount of real business gets done. She feels that she sees President Mitterrand, Chancellor Kohl and M. Chirac often enough at informal bilaterals or in the margins of other international meetings and that these encounters are much more productive than the formal Summits.

At the same time the Prime Minister is well aware that these Summits have a symbolic importance for our European partners which they do not for us; and that the French and Germans for instance hold them far more frequently than we do. She also has in mind the point made by Sir Julian Bullard in his valedictory despatch about the importance of taking trouble with Germany and being punctilious over Anglo-German meetings. Failure to hold Summits would be seen as evidence that we did not attach particular priority to our relations with the countries or even that we had fallen out with them. The impression that Europe revolves round a Franco-German axis would be strengthened. Clearly, we could not just stop having Summits unless we had a convincing alternative proposal to make.

The Prime Minister would like us to give some thought to possible alternatives. One possibility would be a commitment to regular informal meetings and consultations at Head of Government level, with parallel commitments by Ministers at other levels to meet at regular and specified intervals. This would avoid the cumbersome aspects of Summits. But on its own, it would certainly not be enough. Another possibility, which might be combined with the above proposal, would be to set up Joint Secretariats with the French and

German Governments to co-ordinate ministerial contacts and ensure a regular flow of meetings and perhaps handle some of the substance of our regular bilateral relations (although this of course would detract from the role of Embassies).

These are just two ideas. There are no doubt other and better ones. Perhaps you could arrange for a short note to be produced which the Prime Minister could discuss in due course with the Foreign Secretary.

C D POWELL

A. C. Galsworthy, Esq., C.M.G.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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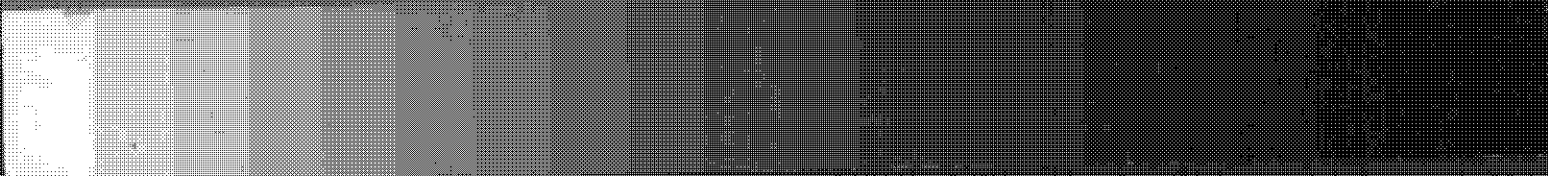
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