

CCB/HP  
PC

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

*ml*

29 September 1986

Dear Charles,

*Prime Minister  
A nice, sensible  
low-key man: a pity  
he is going. CDP  
29/9*

French Ambassador's Farewell Call on the Prime Minister:  
17.30 on 30 September

Thank you for your letter. There are no points the PM need raise. What follows may be useful by way of background.

M. Viot is due to leave London next month, having reached retirement age (65), after slightly less than two years as Ambassador. There have been some positive developments during his posting: better cooperation in the Community after the Fontainebleau European Council; an improvement in the bilateral relationship over defence matters; and the Channel Tunnel agreement. M. Viot's own style has been low-key, but we have always found him sensible, effective and likeable. Earlier this year he was awarded the distinguished title of 'Ambassadeur de France'.

Current major French concerns are terrorism and UNIFIL. Although it is now over a week since the last terrorist incident in Paris, the police have made little progress towards identifying those responsible. The TREVI meeting on 25 September (called at French and German suggestion) made useful headway. The French appear to have found it valuable. The Prime Minister might make it clear to M. Viot that we believe there is room for still further multilateral cooperation at the political level, eg among the Summit Seven.

UNIFIL, particularly the French contingent, has recently come under deliberate attack, and four French soldiers have been killed in the last month. The French have called on the UN to review UNIFIL's role and have threatened to withdraw their contingent; they drafted a UN Security Council Resolution last week calling on the Secretary-General to improve UNIFIL's security on the ground and report within 21 days (14 October). We sympathise with their difficulties, and voted for their Resolution.

The 1986 Anglo/French Summit is fixed for 21 November in Paris. The French have not yet put forward proposals on participation, but it is already clear that M. Chirac's office expect him to be involved as well as President Mitterrand.

/M. Viot

CONFIDENTIAL





M. Viot will return to chair a Committee of Enquiry into the structure and organisation of the French diplomatic service. The French have maintained more overseas posts than the UK (306 against 205 in 1983) and have taken pride in this. Recently they have started to economise. They thus have a structural manpower problem with up to eighty Under Secretaries en disponibilite at any one time. They attach a particular importance to "cultural diplomacy", which will receive 37% of the Quai's 1987 budget, nearly twice the proportion provided in the UK on the British Council, BBC external services and overseas student support.

*Yours ever,*

*Colin Budd*

(C R Budd)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
PS/10 Downing Street

*PS The need to staff French Embassies to cover their expanded visa role will doubtless be one of his preoccupations.*





lit  
SM

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary LONDON SW1A 2AA 29 September 1986

BS

The French Ambassador is to pay a farewell call on the Prime Minister at 1730 tomorrow (30 September). I should be grateful for a brief note by this evening of any points which you would want her to raise with M. Viot.

C D POWELL

Colin Budd, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Mrs. Ryder

①

Could you please give me a time - 15 minutes - this week. I suggest right at the beginning of a day so as not to interfere with speech work. etc.

PRIME MINISTER

The French Ambassador is leaving London on 10 October. He has asked if he can pay a brief farewell call. I know it is a very busy time, but I think you ought to receive him briefly. Agree to a fifteen minute call? - It will have to be a little longer than that.

CDP

Yes  
not

(CHARLES POWELL)

CDP.

1730  
TUE 30 Sept.

26 September 1986