

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

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19 November 1985

Don Loh

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MEETING WITH MONSIEUR PIERRE JOXE

I attach a copy of the note of yesterday's discussion between the Home Secretary and Monsieur Joxe of terrorism related issues.

The final paragraph records an invitation which Monsieur Joxe extended to the Home Secretary to visit Paris for a discussion of wider matters of common interest. I understand that, over lunch, Monsieur Joxe returned to the question of a possible visit to Paris by the Home Secretary. The Home Secretary agreed that such a visit would be useful and mentioned to our Ambassador that he would look to him to provide advice on the timing. Clearly it would be desirable for the discussions to take place before Monsieur Joxe becomes too heavily involved in the run-up to next year's elections in France. The Home Secretary would be grateful for further advice so that he can follow up Monsieur Joxe's invitation as soon as practicable.

A copy of this letter goes to Charles Powell at No 10.

*Yours sincerely
W R Pittall*

W R FITTALL

Colin Budd, Esq

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E.P.

NOTE OF A MEETING HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 1985

ANGLO-FRENCH SUMMIT: TERRORISM

Present: Home Secretary	Monsieur Joxe
Mr Partridge	Monsieur Verbrugge
Miss Lewis Jones	Monsieur Trumau
Mr Fittall	Madame Bourdelet (Translator)

The meeting was one of a number of bilateral discussions taking place in London on the occasion of the Anglo-French Summit. It was preparatory to a plenary session at 10 Downing Street.

2. The Home Secretary in welcoming Monsieur Joxe noted that this was the first time that they had met to discuss matters of common interest. The problem of terrorism was a serious one for both countries and it was good that effective co-operation between the various agencies in this country and their French counterparts was already well established. The Home Secretary said that he would find it helpful to hear from Monsieur Joxe an account of the nature and scale of the terrorist problem facing France. So far as the UK was concerned domestic terrorism (excluding foreign conflicts fought out on British soil) was almost exclusively related to the Irish situation. The two main terrorist groups (INLA and PIRA) were very different from each other in style and organisation but they shared an ability to mount deadly operations on both sides of the Irish Sea. There was every reason to suppose that the Anglo-Irish agreement, far from leading to a reduction in terrorist activity might actually, in the short term, provoke an escalation. It was only in the longer term that the Government could hope to change the climate in which militant nationalism currently flourished. For the time being the extremists would do all in their power to try to show that the agreement between the UK and Ireland was irrelevant. It would be of great assistance to the British authorities therefore if the French agencies could be particularly vigilant for any signs of money or arms en route for Ireland. Possible connections with Libyan sources remained a cause of concern.

3. In response Monsieur Joxe said that his Government was pleased to note the signing of the Anglo-Irish agreement. He had not previously taken the point that it might in the short term lead to an increase in terrorist activity and he confirmed that he would ensure, on return to Paris, that officials were seized of the point. The mechanism for exchanging information between British and French agencies was well established and the French would certainly pass on anything which they learnt which might be of help. The French were particularly alive to possible Libyan involvement in terrorist activity, not least because of the direct implications for themselves of much Libyan activity (for example it was known that 15 New Caledonians had been invited to spend some time in Libya in 1984). The situation in France was more complex than in the United Kingdom. Apart from occasional terrorist incidents whose origins lay in conflicts outside France there were three main types of terrorism. The most worrying was that organised by Action Directe. There were perhaps no more than 20 activists in all (though probably a larger number of people were involved in supporting the group in one way or another). The organisation was committed to taking on the State and was prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to

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mount spectacular operations to further their aims. Most recent incidents seem to have been planned to achieve the maximum publicity with the minimum risk to human life. The one attack which had deliberately involved loss of life appeared to have been heavily influenced by German elements. There were clearly close links between Action Directe and extremist groups in Germany. The French were devoting considerable resources to defeating Action Directe. The size of the group gave grounds for hoping that it could be defeated once and for all but so far the authorities had few leads to work on. Such leads as there were led outside France (though not to the United Kingdom). The second source of terrorist activity was the Basque region. There was no substantial Basque political problem for France; the Basque Independents Movement was a Spanish phenomenon. The difficulties for the French authorities arose from the presence on French soil of terrorists who had mounted attacks in Spain. From time to time there were also attacks against suspected Basque leaders in France which had the hallmarks of being inspired by ultra right-wing groups in Spain. In general, however, the Basque problem like the Corsican problem - the third source of terrorist activity - was going better than a year or two ago. A truce had held in Corsica since the summer.

4. In discussion the following other points were touched on:

- (a) the British Government's willingness to reconsider its extradition laws, and in particular the prima facie test, was welcomed by the French. The French had no plans to review their own law on extradition however. The present arrangements were widely accepted in France on all sides of the political spectrum. The French, despite earlier initiatives, had no enthusiasm for an 'espace européen judiciaire'
- (b) it was noted that both countries faced similar difficulties with the move towards the abolishing of internal frontier controls within the EEC. In both countries the differences of perspective between those responsible for, on the one hand, immigration and law and order and, on the other, the longer term aspirations for a united Europe were similar. Monsieur Joxe cited the example of Sri Lankans arriving in Europe via East Berlin and reaching France via West Germany and East Germany as one which persuaded him, though not necessarily the French Prime Minister or Foreign Minister, of the need for caution in abolishing frontier controls between member states. The Home Secretary said that the traditional British reliance on frontier controls made the European developments particularly worrying. Monsieur Joxe said that in the medium term he was satisfied that frontier controls would need to be intensified. New methods, drawing on the most up-to-date technology, would be necessary;
- (c) the French much preferred practical co-operation of a bilateral or trilateral kind to the sort of multi-lateral ventures which some other countries proposed from time to time. The French had been opposed to the Italian plan (which had in reality been an American proposal in disguise) for a permanent European secretariat on terrorism. Monsieur Joxe said that the French would also oppose plans in the Council of Europe for a new Ministerial structure. Any idea

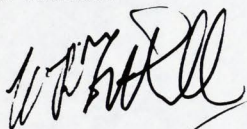
/that the Summit

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that the Summit Seven should discuss terrorism was also an anathema to the French; the value of the summits as occasions for discussing economic problems should not be undermined by the introduction of extraneous subjects, however important in their own right;

- (d) the Home Secretary noted the need for an up-dating of the communication system for use by the Trevi partners. Monsieur Joxe said that the French were already spending considerable sums of money on the installation of secure communication systems between Paris and the Prefecture and would therefore be very sympathetic in principle to the need for effective and modern communication systems within Trevi. The precise proposals would need to be considered further at a technical level.

5. In conclusion, Monsieur Joxe said that he would be delighted to welcome the Home Secretary to Paris, outside the framework of the regular summit meetings, for a discussion of wider matters of common interest.



W R FITTALL
Private Secretary

Private Office
19.11.85

cc. Mr Pike
Mr Webber
Mr Partridge
Mr Hilary
Mr Harrington
Mr Nagler
Miss Lewis Jones