



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

24 February 1989

2 C/P

Dear Charles

Richard Austin
You enquired about
this. C/P 24/2.

Paris Economic Summit: Mitterrand Initiative
on Money Laundering and Drugs

(at play)

Thank you for your letter of 22 February.

We have not yet signed an agreement with the French on the confiscation of drug traffickers' assets. But negotiations are due to begin on 8 March when a team of officials will visit Paris.

Hitherto the French have been reluctant to conclude a bilateral agreement. They have favoured a multilateral approach to cooperation, arguing that an agreement would be difficult until the UK signed the European Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance. We in turn are unable to do this without new primary legislation, which is not expected before the 1989/90 session. There appear to be some internal divisions between French departments, with the Ministry of Justice preferring the multilateral route and the Ministry of the Interior favouring a bilateral agreement.

Following a series of meetings between the Home Secretary and M Joxe, the Interior Minister, and continued lobbying by our Embassy, the French have finally agreed to open negotiations on a bilateral agreement in Paris on 8 March.

Yours ever

Boyle

(R N Peirce)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

Filed at Paris Econ Summit

Econ Pd Pt 28

b. u. Nd

