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Mitterrand Press Conference

As with Giscard, we have arranged for your open press conference with President Mitterrand to be held in the cinema of the Millbank Tower. There will be simultaneous translation through earpieces. I have arranged for yourself and the President solely to occupy the table, with officials behind.

Before inviting questions, you will no doubt wish to open the proceedings, giving a flavour of the bilateral and to invite the President to say his piece.

The purpose of this minute is, in so far as it is possible at this stage, to identify

- our objectives in the press conference;
- the media's objectives at the press conference;
- topics which are likely to be raised.

Our Objectives

We wish this first bilateral with Mitterrand (on our soil) to be seen as a success for Anglo/French relations, cementing the good personal relations and understanding established at three previous meetings on a basis of an open and frank relationship. This is notwithstanding differences of approach inherent in Conservative and Socialist administrations.

At the same time, it is important, if only for domestic UK reasons, also to be seen to be effectively representing the national interest - e.g. on EC Budget restructuring, CAP reform, fish, turkeys, etc.

But our aim should be to present the bilateral as a meeting between statesmen with similar highly constructive views of

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their role, both in the EC and the wider world, and to put any areas of bilateral difficulty in perspective.

### Press Objectives

The media, unless forced, takes much less interest in accord than in division. As with all French bilaterals, we have to work very hard to secure a helpful, harmonious presentation. Thus, it is important that, to the extent you feel able, you and the President should go out of your way to accentuate the positive.

This is especially important on this occasion because of your differing economic policies and the areas of difference, real or imagined, that exist.

Having said that, there are risks in appearing to be over friendly, since the media is very much on the alert for evidence of a re-shaping of the triangle formed by France, Germany and ourselves. There has been some interest in all the pre-briefings I have given in the new balance of this triangular relationship.

### Likely Areas of Questioning

The French, according to the media, have been putting it about that the emphasis was likely to be on bilateral issues (no doubt to try to avoid Community crunch issues on which the FT today said sharp differences are likely to emerge). Thus, you can expect questions on:

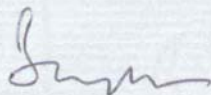
- fish;
- poultry imports;
- Concorde (Airbus);
- Chunnel;
- Insurance and air fares; and possibly
- space.

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Since, as the brief says, there is speculation that the Irish may have lobbied the French over Northern Ireland, this may also be raised.

The media will also wish on a higher plane to explore your approaches to the following areas of potential difference or emphasis:

- || - Economic policy reflation; US interest rates; and your views on the latest French Government's nationalisation moves;
- EC Mandate;
- Cancun;
- Southern Africa;
- Arab/Israel (and relations with PLO/Arafat, in view of Annex I);
- Export credit consensus rates.



B. INGHAM

10 September, 1981