

PRIME MINISTER

Visit of President Mitterrand

The other day the Foreign Secretary pointed out that whereas you see a great deal of Chancellor Kohl you only see the French President for a bilateral once a year,

The chief objection to doing more with President Mitterrand is that French protocol dictates with bilaterals that they are cumbersome and time-consuming affairs. But it is rather odd that we have relatively little bilateral contact with a major European partner.

I wonder whether you would like to propose to President Mitterrand during his visit this week that the annual bilateral should be supplemented each year by a small working dinner. Alternately, you would go to Paris for talks followed by a working dinner; and he would come here for the same. In both cases no more than an evening would be involved.

*I should prefer to keep this on an informal rather than a regular basis.*

I think this could be valuable in itself, The suggestion might also get this week's summit off to a good start. If you wanted to pursue it, I think we should try it out on the French before you and the President meet. I should not want your proposal to be met by silence or a non-committal reply from the President.

Would you like this to be pursued?

A. J. C.

18 October 1983