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Original on  
FRANCE  
PM's visit, PLS

PRIME MINISTER

**BILATERAL MEETING WITH EUROPEAN LEADERS**

Could I possibly ask you to look again at the question of meetings with Chirac and Kohl before the European Council.

I think there is a good case for a meeting with Chirac. We only got a solution on our budget contribution at Fontainebleau because you got the French working with us. The same will apply this time round: we shall only sort out future financing by arrangement with the French - although this time it is Chirac rather than Mitterrand who will have the greater say. Chirac for his part is very keen to see you and it would be a pity to turn him down. Certainly we cannot say that a meeting will ensure a satisfactory outcome at Copenhagen, which on balance remains unlikely. But I think we can say that there is no chance of a satisfactory solution unless you meet beforehand.

Against this, I absolutely understand your reluctance to give up yet more time when you already have a grindingly hard programme this autumn. When all is said and done, the most important thing is not to overburden you.

If you decide that you will see Chirac in Paris the two possible dates are:

- the early evening of Sunday 22 November. This would mean in practice giving up the whole of your Sunday afternoon and evening. The 'advantages' are that it is after the Lord Mayor's Banquet, is still far enough ahead of the European Council to let the results filter through, and is immediately before Chirac's own session with Schluter. Chirac cannot manage Saturday 21 November to which you earlier agreed, since he is in Reunion in the Indian Ocean campaigning.

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- Saturday 28 November. This seems to me less good. A Saturday meeting breaks up your weekend more, you are away immediately beforehand and it is a bit close up against the European Council itself. But it is certainly manageable if you prefer it.

The question of a meeting with Kohl is subsidiary. There is not usually a great deal to be gained by discussing EC matters with him bilaterally. The idea of a meeting really only arises if you decide that, having crossed the Channel, you may as well kill two birds with the one stone.

I attach a copy of the diary for the relevant period, to help you decide.

Agree to see Chirac on 22 November or 28 November.

Agree to pursue idea of a meeting with Kohl the same day?

OR

Prefer to drop meeting with Kohl?

C. D. POWELL

30 October 1987

PMMAJO