

Ref: A01694

PRIME MINISTER

1. Seen by the P.M. who agreed,  
in discussion with the Foreign Secretary  
and Chancellor of the Exchequer, that  
the visit should take place. Sir Robert  
Armstrong was present.

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At our last discussion with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary about the Community Budget, Lord Carrington said that he thought it would be useful if I were to go over and see M. Jacques Wahl, the Secretary General to President Giscard, before your meeting with Chancellor Schmidt and the Meeting of the European Council on 31st March.

2. I believe that such a contact would make sense and be valuable. Though the conversations which Mr. Franklin and others have been having with French officials will have got some of the way, there is no doubt that it is only by talking either to M. Wahl or M. Barre that we shall come near to the President's own thinking, which is likely to be crucial. I made a contact with M. Wahl when I went over to Paris in January for a meeting with him and his American and German counterparts, and can therefore build on the contact thus established.

3. As to the timing of the visit, it ought presumably to wait until after the meeting of the Cabinet on 20th March. I am minded to go either on Friday, 21st March or on Monday 24th March; I should prefer not to leave it until later, because you are due to have a briefing meeting on the morning of 26th March for Chancellor Schmidt's visit and the meeting of the European Council.

4. I should propose to be accompanied by Mr. Franklin.

5. If you agree that such a visit would be useful I ought to give M. Wahl a few days notice. I would propose to send him a message on 17th March.

(Robert Armstrong)

14th March 1980