

Ref. A09610

MR. STOWE

Prime Minister's Visit to Paris

I found paragraph 3 of Paris telegram No. 245 (about the accompanying team) unclear and not very helpful. I have therefore had a direct word myself with the Secretary General at the Elysee, M. Wahl, since there is an element of ping pong going on (i. e. we have asked the French about participation on their side and they have more or less said that they leave it to us). In the light of my conversation I wish to put forward specific suggestions for the Prime Minister's consideration. I have little doubt that they would be acceptable to the French but they are in no sense agreed between M. Wahl and me, and the Prime Minister is entirely free to discard them and put forward a different proposition. The French are however anxious to know the Prime Minister's wishes as soon as possible so that they can make the necessary arrangements at their end.

2. The overriding purpose of the visit is to enable the Prime Minister to establish close personal contact with President Giscard in advance of the European Council in Strasbourg, and I think it is important that the morning session should be devoted primarily to a discussion between the two of them, although President Giscard may want to bring in M. Barre, as Prime Minister, towards the end of this talk. Wahl would expect to be with President Giscard for this session and the Prime Minister may want me to accompany her. I do not think that any other British Ministers or officials need be involved at this first stage. You would of course take whatever No. 10 supporting party is decided upon. I would like to take Mr. Franklin with me since he has a new opposite number in the Elysee with whom he could make contact during the Prime Minister's talk with President Giscard.

3. The next question is what other Ministers and officials should attend the lunch and the plenary session in the afternoon. Clearly Lord Carrington should come and he would want to be accompanied by Sir Michael Palliser, one other senior official and a Private Secretary. The Prime Minister could decide that

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she does not want to have a bigger party than that, in which case Lord Carrington could perhaps join the talks when M. Barre does. I did however derive the definite impression that the French hoped that other Ministers would be coming too. This may just be a natural wish to meet some of their new opposite numbers: but it could also be a wish that this meeting should not seem less important than the Prime Minister's recent meeting with Schmidt.

4. If a rather larger party is to be taken I do not think that Sir Geoffrey Howe should be included: he will be in the final stages of his Budget preparations and has in any case already seen M. Monory. M. Wahl went out of his way however to mention to me that he knew their Ministers of Defence and Industry would be available. The Prime Minister may therefore want to consider including Mr. Pym, although defence collaboration with the French (in particular in relation to nuclear matters) is not something that can be rushed and the President normally likes to deal with the most sensitive issues himself. Sir Keith Joseph will be in the United States but the French Minister for Industry has responsibility for energy questions and these will loom large over the next few months and in the run-up to Tokyo. There is therefore a case for including Mr. Howell. The other obvious candidate is Mr. Peter Walker, but I do not think that he is likely to make much progress with his opposite number on the CAP (even though his style would be welcomed in contrast to that of his predecessor!) during the course of this visit. On balance therefore I would recommend Mr. Pym and Mr. Howell with Mr. Walker if the Prime Minister wanted to take a fourth Minister: each would no doubt want to bring one official with them.

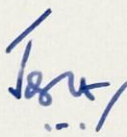
5. Finally, there is the question whether the other Ministers should seek to have bilaterals with their opposite numbers while the Prime Minister is talking to Giscard during the morning or should come out in a second HS 125 to join the Prime Minister for lunch and the plenary session. The French would fall in with either plan.

6. To sum up, I need to be able to tell M. Wahl:-

- (i) Whether the Prime Minister agrees that she and the President should meet alone for most or all of the morning session (with Wahl and myself as notetakers).

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- (ii) Whether if M. Barre joined the talks shortly before lunch she would like Lord Carrington to do so also.
 - (iii) Whether she would like Mr. Pym and Mr. Howell (? also Mr. Walker) to attend the lunch and plenary in addition to Lord Carrington, together with their accompanying officials. If so, would she like bilaterals arranged for these Ministers in the morning or would she prefer them to follow out in time for lunch?
 - (iv) I assume she would also like our Ambassador in Paris to attend the lunch and the plenary.
7. The usual submission about objectives and briefing will follow shortly.


JOHN HUNT

22nd May, 1979