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(plw. briefs for European Council).



at Soviet Union Prime Minister
Sept 79; credit Tompkins
Gopals to USSR

CABINET OFFICE

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From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO

And

Ref. A04505

19th March, 1981

Wheat for the Soviet Union

The Secretary-General in the Elysee, Monsieur Jacques Wahl, telephoned Sir Robert Armstrong this afternoon about the proposed sale of 600,000 tonnes of wheat to the Soviet Union. He said that the French Government were concerned that this proposed sale seemed to be developing into a major cause of dispute in Europe. Monsieur Wahl argued that the sale was a routine question and not the sort of substantial matter which should provoke disagreement. In addition, he said, the quantity of 600,000 tonnes proposed in 1981 was the same as in 1980 and the cost to the Community would not be very high. Furthermore, according to Monsieur Wahl, the United States Government, who could have been expected to object to this sale, had let it be known that they were not concerned about it.

Sir Robert Armstrong took note of what Monsieur Wahl had said, agreed to look into the question, and to be in touch with him again.

I have spoken to Michael Franklin about this and he says that this French approach is something on which the Prime Minister will need to be briefed for Maastricht. You will wish to arrange for this to be put in hand.

I should also be grateful for advice as to what Sir Robert should say when he rings back. Copies of this letter go to Kate Timms (MAFF), John Wiggins (Treasury), Stuart Hampson (Trade) and Michael Alexander (No. 10).

D. J. WRIGHT

(D. J. Wright)
Private Secretary

R. A. Burns, Esq.

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