

PRIME MINISTER

Jacques Wahl telephoned me this morning at President Giscard's request.

The President seeks your support in securing the election of Madame Veil to the Presidency of the European Assembly. She herself is described, by M. Wahl, as a "Liberal-Conservative", but she has great symbolic significance as a survivor of Auschwitz. The President believes that many of the Christian Democrat members of the Assembly, including the Germans, will vote for her as, of course, will the French. If they can rally the support of others, including the Conservatives, this would give her a majority. Hence President Giscard's message to you: he hopes that you would feel able to commit the United Kingdom Conservatives in the European Assembly to support Madame Veil. Without their support he thinks there is a real risk of the Socialists securing the Presidency - and he thinks you would not welcome that anymore than he would! Although she is not a Christian Democrat, in terms, he believes that the German Christian Democrats would vote for her because of her significance as a symbol of Franco-German reconciliation.

If you are sympathetic to this approach, President Giscard would be willing to arrange for Madame Veil to come over to see you and he would obviously like to do that.

I undertook to report this to you and to ring back M. Wahl as soon as possible.

Two comments on this:

- a. This is an interesting and encouraging use of the direct link between the President's office in the Elysee and No. 10, and is to be welcomed on that ground.
- b. You will need to assess this proposition also in terms of UK-FRG relationships, including possible reaction from Helmut Schmidt - it would be sensible to get Lord Carrington's advice both on the substance and on the handling of the matter.

/You may also



You may also want to bring Lord Thorneycroft into consultation. There is no desperate urgency about this in that the Assembly does not meet until 17 July when the election of the President is first business - but obviously the lobbying and negotiation will have been completed well before then.

KRS.

I should be very happy to report.  
But we must consult. Tim Scott-Hopkins  
and Tim Spicer as well. There is no need  
for Madame Vail to fly over - I have  
met her and remember the interview well  
OK.

11 June 1979