



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

17 November 1982

Prime Minister

You may like to glance
at paras. 8 to 11 of General
Mostyn's despatch.

A. J. C. 18.
11

Dear Sir

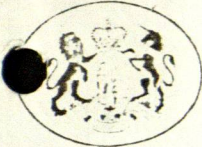
Prime Minister's Visit to Berlin: 29 October

/ In their telno 125 (copy enclosed for reference)
BMG Berlin reported the outstanding success of the
Prime Minister's visit to the city. I understand that they
have already sent a set of local press cuttings direct to
/ Bernard Ingham. I now enclose a copy of General Mostyn's
formal despatch on the visit, on which we understand that
Sir J Taylor (to whom it was addressed) does not intend to
comment.

You are
R B Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street



BRITISH MILITARY GOVERNMENT
BERLIN
BRITISH FORCES POST OFFICE 45

4 November 1982

Sir Jock Taylor KCMG
HM Ambassador
British Embassy
BONN

Sir

THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO BERLIN: 29 OCTOBER 1982

1 The Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher, MP, visited Berlin on 29 October 1982. Since you accompanied her throughout her programme, you were able to see for yourself how very successfully the visit went and the strong resonance it achieved in the Berlin, and the national, news media. It may be helpful nevertheless to record in this despatch something of the genesis of the visit and the shape the Prime Minister's programme took.

2 Among former Prime Ministers, Mr Wilson had visited Berlin in 1965 and 1969, and Mr Heath in 1971. When Mr Callaghan came in January 1976, it was as Foreign Secretary, shortly before he became Prime Minister. It was thus eleven years since a British Prime Minister last visited Berlin. When Mrs Thatcher assumed office in May 1979, it so happened that the then Governing Mayor, Herr Stobbe, had been invited to visit London a fortnight later; and the Prime Minister was kind enough, amid the preoccupations of forming her administration, to find time to receive him. She responded to his invitation to visit Berlin with a promise to do so when she could.

3 It was clear even then that the best prospect for a visit would be for it to follow on from one of the annual autumn Anglo-German consultations in Bonn; and that it would be more effective to build up to it as the culmination of a series of previous visits by other members of the Cabinet rather than start at the top. Accordingly we had visits in 1980 by Mr Pym as Secretary of State for Defence and Sir Ian Gilmour as Lord Privy Seal, followed by Lord Carrington



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as Foreign Secretary in October last year. The care which Her Majesty's Government have taken to arrange a steady (but not too rapid) succession of senior Ministerial visits has been noted and appreciated in Berlin at all levels from the Governing Mayor downwards.

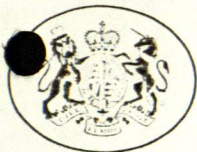
4 This background helped to give a particular sense of anticipation and of welcome to the arrival of the Prime Minister herself. The Governing Mayor, like all his predecessors, attaches very special importance to his periodic contacts with the Heads of Government of the three Allied Powers. He had already had the honour of being received in Washington and Paris by Presidents Reagan and Mitterrand respectively; but the Argentine invasion of the Falklands on 2 April had inevitably forced the cancellation of his appointment with the Prime Minister in London that day. He was thus all the more pleased when in July we were able to convey the news that Mrs Thatcher would visit Berlin in October.

5 It was to be her first visit ever to Berlin. We were warned from the outset that it would be difficult for the Prime Minister to spare more than a long half-day, and in the event she spent some seven hours in this city, arriving in the early afternoon and returning to London after dinner that evening. I enclose copies of the detailed programme. There were four main ingredients to be accommodated within it, and we were able to do this without difficulty within the time available. They comprised:-

- (a) a visit to the Berlin Wall;
- (b) a short meeting with the Governing Mayor at Rathaus Schöneberg, followed by the signature of the Golden Book of Berlin;
- (c) a meeting with representatives of the British Military Government and garrison; and
- (d) the Governing Mayor's dinner at Charlottenburg Palace.
(Guest list enclosed.)

Had there been more time available you and I would have liked to show Mrs Thatcher more of the city, and of the work of the garrison. But that would have been a bonus, and as it was the programme covered

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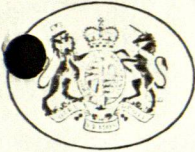
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all the essentials. We recommended against the holding of a press conference, in order not to distract in any way from the impact of Mrs Thatcher's principal message, her speech at the Golden Book ceremony.

6 Two aspects in particular contributed to the success of the visit with the Senat, the media and the public. The first was the Prime Minister's gesture in laying a bouquet of white lilies at the memorial crosses near the Reichstag, which commemorate some of those who lost their lives trying to escape from East Berlin, and the extended tour she undertook with the Royal Military Police of the section of the Wall between the Reichstag and Potsdamer Platz. These were things which previous official visitors have not, to our knowledge, done. They evinced, and were seen by the media and public as evidence of, a much more genuine interest and feeling about the Wall than the customary, but often rather perfunctory, photo-call in front of the Brandenburg Gate.

7 The second was the clarity and conviction of the Prime Minister's speech at the Golden Book ceremony, of which I enclose the text as delivered, with translations of speeches by Dr von Weizsäcker and Dr Kohl. The Senat had gathered for this occasion between 400 and 500 invited guests, comprising members of the House of Representatives (although the Alternative Liste boycotted the ceremony), leaders of the political parties and business community, other prominent Berliners, and representatives of the Anglophile societies and the Allied garrisons. The ceremony was televised live in Berlin, and well covered that evening on nationwide TV news programmes. In his graceful speech of welcome the Governing Mayor thanked Mrs Thatcher for having come, to underline once more the British commitment and guarantee to Berlin. He also made a point both of thanking her for the British action in the Falklands, as a service to the international rule of law, and of drawing the moral for Berlin. He is one of few politicians in Germany who have consistently taken so forthright a line. Not everyone in Berlin approved the British military action in the Falklands at the time - Dr Vogel, for one, the leader of the Berlin SPD and now his party's new Chancellor candidate, did not. Nevertheless I believe

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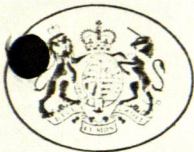
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that a majority of thinking Berliners do see our action there as reassuring for Berlin.

8 The Prime Minister spoke next, striking a note to which Berlin is no longer much accustomed since the Quadripartite Agreement. But, if this predictably elicited sharp reactions from Neues Deutschland and Tass next day, it went down well with her audience and the Berliners. The audience could be seen and heard to like it; and virtually all those Berliners to whom we have since talked say they welcomed and found refreshing Mrs Thatcher's plain restatement of the truth about the Wall and the system it encloses, and her reminder that strength and vigilance are the price of the liberty West Berlin enjoys. Her speech was printed in full next day, not only by the principal local dailies - Tagesspiegel, Morgenpost and Welt - but even by "BZ", the local Springer tabloid; and the accompanying press comment was enthusiastic (BMG telegram No 125 to Bonn). The Prime Minister left her audience, and readers, in no doubt about British determination to honour our commitments and resist aggression, in Berlin or elsewhere.

9 It may be appropriate at this point to mention Russian reactions to the visit. As soon as it had been announced, the Soviet Embassy in East Berlin were at us repeatedly to enquire whether the Federal Chancellor would accompany Mrs Thatcher from Bonn. After it became known that he would, the Soviet and GDR Ambassadors in London each made representations that Chancellor Kohl's presence would be in breach of the Quadripartite Agreement. (FCO telegrams Nos 54 and 57 to BMG, Berlin.) Two days after the visit the Soviet Counsellor in East Berlin called on our Political Adviser to complain that the windows of the Aeroflot office in West Berlin had been broken the previous night (in fact by an enraged Pole). He went on to attribute this violence indirectly to incitement by "recent provocative statements" by British and Senat, as well as Federal, representatives. But these representations were made in low key and without conviction, one felt. It was a help to us in rebutting them that Chancellor Kohl himself, at their joint press conference in Bonn on the morning of 29 October, had explicitly described his visit to Berlin as being at the Prime Minister's invitation.

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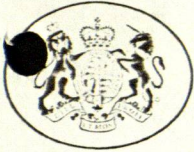
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10 The presence of the Federal Chancellor during the visit posed some of the usual protocol and practical problems. There had to be interpreters throughout; and, since the Governing Mayor felt that he could not exclude Dr Kohl, there was no opportunity (except at dinner) for the Prime Minister to talk to Dr von Weizsäcker privately without the Chancellor's participation. The latter's insistence that Frau Kohl should attend what had been intended as a business discussion at the Rathaus, between the Prime Minister and Governing Mayor in a tightly restricted circle, changed the character of that meeting. But the Governing Mayor had made it plain to us privately beforehand that, whilst he found that arrangement rather extraordinary, he was not disposed to resist the German Chancellor's wishes. In any case, Dr von Weizsäcker said, he had not intended to raise substantive matters with the Prime Minister: the substance was her visit itself. Other matters could be dealt with through the usual channels.

11 I have already referred to the extensive and favourable media coverage of the visit, but here I might add that, in addition to printing Mrs Thatcher's speech, the papers next day were full of human interest items about the reactions of the crowds who had gathered at the Reichstag, Potsdamer Platz, and Schöneberg Rathaus to see Mrs Thatcher, and of her contacts with them. Along her route in from Gatow local residents turned out to wave her welcome, including the complete clientele of a ladies' coiffeur in their curlers and wraps! At the Reichstag a crowd of five or six hundred had gathered, and it was good to see that they were predominantly younger people. Everywhere the atmosphere was spontaneous, relaxed and warmly welcoming. The press made much of the Berlin bear, whom one of the bystanders presented to Mrs Thatcher at the Potsdamer Platz.

12 Although we had had some prior indications that local IRA-sympathisers were planning to demonstrate, and that some of the militant anarchists among the squatters hoped to provoke a violent confrontation with the police, we also knew in advance that they were finding very little support. On the day itself nothing of the

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sort occurred. A single man was spotted, on the Heerstrasse, carrying a "No more heroes" placard.

13 All in all the Prime Minister's visit could not have been more successful. My staff and I are much in her debt for the time and trouble she took to make it so; and her meeting with garrison representatives at my Headquarters was of course a highlight of its own for us. But I should like to add our thanks too to the Prime Minister for the way in which her visit has reinforced the respect and affection in which Britain is held in Berlin, and in so doing materially assisted us in our task. Since the visit we have had many messages of congratulations and thanks from our Berlin friends, foremost among them the Governing Mayor.

14 I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and to Her Majesty's Ambassadors in East Berlin, Moscow, Paris and Washington, to the UK Permanent Representative to NATO, and the Secretariat, Commanders-in-Chief Committee, Germany.

I have the honour to be
Sir,
Your Obedient Servant

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "David Mostyn".

J D F Mostyn
Major-General