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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

*Prime Minister*  
*Yes*  
*agree to see*  
*Dr Kohl*  
*cannot manage*  
*a meal.*

*- Can F.S. manage a*

19 August 1981 *meal Kohl*

*CF: Have already*  
*offered (i.e. previous dates) 20/8.*

*is very*  
*important in the*  
*political scene*  
*at present*

*Dear Caroline,*

Proposed visit by Dr Kohl to the UK

We spoke about Dr Kohl's visit to the UK and the proposal that he should see the Prime Minister.

As background I enclose a copy of the entry on Dr Kohl in the latest Leading Personality Report. You will see from this that he is Chairman of the CDU and leader of the Opposition. As such, he is a strong contender for the Chancellorship, given the present shaky state of the governing coalition. You should be aware that, when the Secretary of State saw Dr Kohl at the EDU meeting in Klessheim on 3 July, they agreed that Dr Kohl would visit London in the autumn, and Dr Kohl clearly expected to see both the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister.

At this stage we need make no firm plans, but Bonn have asked for a couple of alternative dates which could be put to Dr Kohl when the Ambassador lunches with him on 27 August. The visit, which will be under Category I auspices, will last for 3-4 days, and we have already established that November is the best month. The Secretary of State would be free on 5, 6 or 19 November. Would the Prime Minister be available on any of these dates or on dates on either side of them? The Prime Minister may wish to give Dr Kohl a meal, given his position as head of a conservative party in a major neighbouring state.

We have had a word with Conservative Party Central Office about the visit. You will no doubt wish to discuss it further with them.

*Yours sincerely,*  
*Francis Richards*  
(F N Richards)  
Private Secretary

Miss Caroline Stephens  
No 10 Downing St

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KOHL, DR HELMUT

Chairman of the CDU and leader of the joint CDU/CSU Parliamentary Party. Chancellor-candidate of the CDU/CSU in 1976.

Born 1930 in Ludwigshafen, son of a minor official. Studied law and history at Frankfurt and Heidelberg. Joined the CDU at age 17, and became a member of its Land Executive at 25. Member of the Land Parliament 1959, and Chairman of CDU Parliamentary group there from 1963. Member of the CDU Federal Executive since 1966. Chairman of the CDU in Rheinland-Pfalz 1966-73. Minister-President of Rheinland-Pfalz 1969-76. Chairman of the CDU since 1973 and of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Party since 1976.

As Minister-President was active in modernising the Land Administration, expanding higher education and promoting industrialisation. (In 1971 Landtag elections the CDU put up its best performance ever, gaining an absolute majority of seats.) He played a large part in the early 70's in planning a new policy for the CDU, but noticeably failed to stand up for certain aspects of this when they came under fire at the 1971 CDU Federal Party Conference. This contributed to his defeat by Dr Barzel in the elections that year for the CDU Party Chairmanship. But after careful groundwork in the party, cultivating the younger generation and the centre, he was the only candidate for the Chairmanship at the Special Party Conference in June 1973, after Dr Barzel's resignation. He was re-elected Party Chairman of the CDU's Party Conference in June 1975, by an unprecedentedly large majority. After a period of intense political manoeuvring, he finally achieved his goal of nomination as Chancellor-candidate of the CDU/CSU for the 1976 elections in June 1975. But the grudging terms in which Strauss and the CSU gave him their support undermined his authority as opposition leader. Nonetheless he ran a skilful and energetic election campaign in 1976, and came close to unseating Schmidt and the SPD/FDP coalition. Subsequently he decided to move to Bonn to lead the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Party. In the course of 1979 it became clear that Kohl did not have sufficient support to lead the Union into the 1980 Federal Election. He stood down, leaving Albrecht and Strauss as the two contenders for the job of Chancellor-candidate. Following the choice of Strauss, Kohl fell in loyally behind the CSU leader and ran an energetic and effective campaign. He let it be known however that he was not interested in Cabinet office in the event of a CDU/CSU victory. Following Strauss' defeat Kohl has re-emerged with enhanced prestige as the strongest figure in the Union camp, having as he does a foot in both the party machine and the parliamentary party. On present form he must be favourite to run for Chancellor-candidate in 1984. He is still only 50.

A big man physically, energetic and ambitious, who has risen through hard work rather than natural ability. His speeches are rather tedious; his style has however considerably improved in the past year or two. Visited the UK in 1976.

Catholic, married to a Protestant: 2 sons. Speaks some French but no English. His wife, who studied in Paris, speaks both French and English.