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Mr. Butler, No. 10



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My dear Christopher,

Call on Herr Teltschik

As you know, Alastair Hunter kindly arranged for me to call on Teltschik, the new Deputy Secretary in charge of foreign and defence affairs at the Federal Chancellery, on 18th March. I said that I would let you have a note of what passed.

The Federal German Scene

2. Teltschik was predictably pleased and confident about the new German Government's future. He said that the CDU could look forward to being in power for at least 8 years. The current impasse in the coalition negotiations reflected Strauss' personal tragedy: that he had failed in his bid to win the elections as Chancellor candidate in 1980 and saw the formation of the new coalition as his last opportunity to play a major part on the Federal scene. Kohl however felt a strong sense of personal obligation to Genscher, Lambsdorff and Stoltenberg. Genscher and Lambsdorff were the two people who had laid their political careers on the line in order to bring about the change of government; and Stoltenberg had given up being Ministerpraesident to come to Bonn as Finance Minister. Kohl had therefore made it clear to Strauss that the Foreign, Economic and Finance Ministries were not available, but that he could have any other Cabinet post he wished. Asked if this included the Defence Ministry, Teltschik said he supposed it did, although he had reservations about Strauss' suitability. He (Teltschik) regarded the chances of Strauss taking up Kohl's offer and coming to Bonn in a ministerial capacity other than the one he wanted as about 50-50.

Relations with the US: INF Deployment

3. On relations with the United States, Teltschik was dismissive of the criticisms of the US Administration aired that morning at Königswinter by Ted Sommer and Karl Kaiser, whom he described as "Jetset Wissenschaftler" who moved from one international seminar to another and did not reflect opinion at home. Nor did they realise how close the understanding was between Washington and Bonn or between Washington and other West European Governments. At the same time it was important that the Europeans should maintain pressure on Washington to put forward new proposals at Geneva for an interim agreement and in general to maintain the momentum of the INF negotiations. This had been the purpose of Kohl's interview with the Washington Post. Whatever happened in the Geneva negotiations, the Federal Government was quite clear that INF deployment would be necessary. There were two essentials: to maintain the agreed weapons mix (ie to ensure that Pershing IIs were included even in a scaled down deployment) and to stick to the agreed timetable. Demonstrations were of course to be expected, but these would be manageable and would be dealt with firmly. The fact that the Greens were represented in the Bundestag and hence

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involved in the orthodox political process would act as a useful curb on their extra-parliamentary activities. Meanwhile all the other left wing causes - house occupation in Berlin, opposition to civil nuclear energy etc - had lost impetus following the general election and it remained to be seen whether the Left in its present somewhat demoralised condition would be able to revitalise or orchestrate them.

Dual Key

4. I asked Teltschik how he viewed the current public debate in Britain about dual key. He said that a decision by the British Government to seek dual key arrangements would create great difficulties for the Federal Government, which could not and would not go for similar arrangements. It would also undermine the agreed basis for implementing the 1979 double decision and thus have a damaging effect throughout the Alliance. (For obvious reasons I did not press Teltschik on this; but I noticed that when the subject came up with Hans Schauer at Königswinter he was less categorical than Teltschik. Schauer was inclined to the view that although the German Government would be seriously embarrassed by a British decision to seek dual key, at the end of the day they could probably come to terms with it.)

Ostpolitik

5. Asked about the future of Ostpolitik, Teltschik said that the new Government's policies were firmly directed towards keeping the FRG anchored to the West. This had been Adenauer's achievement; and it was what distinguished the CDU from people in the SPD like Bahr, who at heart were old fashioned German nationalists looking as much to the East as to the West. But Kohl saw no conflict between a firmly Western orientation for the FRG and a successful Ostpolitik. Indeed, the former was a precondition for the latter. It was not an accident that Gromyko had been one of the first foreign visitors to Bonn after Kohl's assumption of the Chancellorship. Meanwhile Honeker had also reacted constructively and said that he would be willing to visit the FRG this year subject only to "diary difficulties".

Franco-German Defence Dialogue

6. I asked Teltschik what importance was to be attached to the Franco-German defence dialogue, and in particular whether the substance of it was in any way new. He said that the new feature was the seriousness of the French Government's interest in pursuing it. From the German side the main areas they wanted the dialogue to cover were

- a. the consequence for French conventional forces of the concentration of resources on enhancing France's nuclear capability, and German concern to prevent a further thinning out of French forces stationed in the FRG;
- b. questions relating to the range and targetting of French nuclear weapons, with a view to ensuring that these would not be directed primarily against targets in Germany (including the GDR); and
- c. the need for a collective collaborative approach to defence expenditure. Teltschik added that on this latter point the Germans wanted to make sure that the United Kingdom was brought in too.

Teltschik was emphatic that there was no question of the Franco-German dialogue being directed towards working out a distinctively European nuclear strategy or establishing a separate European pillar within the Alliance. The Germans continued to regard the American connection and the need to couple America

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firmly into the defence of Western Europe as overriding. There might however be some scope for discussion of more effective forms of burden sharing as between European members of the Alliance, with a view to improving our conventional capability and preventing any further lowering of the nuclear threshold. It would be beyond our collective means, both in manpower and in money terms, to achieve a significant increase in conventional capability; but it was important to make sure that it was maintained at least at its present level. Hence the importance the German Government attached to maintaining the effectiveness of BAOR and preventing any further rundown in French forces in the FRG.

Relations with the United Kingdom

7. In conclusion, Teltschik went out of his way to emphasise that German interest in the Franco-German dialogue would not be at the expense of their relations with the United Kingdom, to which Kohl attached great importance. The present degree of political sympathy between the two governments was too great for there to be any danger of Bonn neglecting its links with London; indeed it was something on which Kohl was very much hoping to build. The first signs of a general economic recovery were now apparent; the German Government could look forward to a long period in office; and they were hoping that the present British Government would shortly be re-elected. The scene would then be set for a close and productive phase in our relationship. I made a suitably appreciative response.

8. This was the first time I had ever met Teltschik. You and the Ambassador have already seen a lot of him and have no doubt formed your own assessment. Obviously he is young and relatively inexperienced. But he struck me as sensible, intelligent and open. Certainly his account of the Franco-German defence dialogue was franker than I had expected. He gave me what seemed to be a genuinely warm welcome. From my point of view it was a very useful first contact, which I can now follow up as opportunity offers or the situation requires.

9. I am sending a copy of this letter to Robin Butler at No.10, who I understand will be seeing Teltschik shortly in preparation for the next Anglo-German Summit; and to Andrew Wood in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Yours ever

David

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