

cc DC
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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Prime Minister

London SW1A 2AH

Agree message at

Fly C ?

24 May 1984

John Johnson

ASL 24/5

Ms. - mt

Message of Congratulations to Dr von Weizsaecker,
Newly-Elected President of the Federal Republic of
Germany

/ Dr Richard von Weizsaecker, until recently Governing
Mayor of Berlin, was elected to the office of Federal
President on 23 May. I enclose a personality note.

/ It would be appropriate for The Queen to send a message
of congratulations when he takes up office on 1 July. The
Prime Minister may wish to send a message now on his election,
/ as she did to his predecessor President Carstens (copy
enclosed). We understand that Presidents Reagan and Mitterrand
/ are also sending messages now. I enclose a draft.

If the Prime Minister agrees, we will send the text to
Bonn by telegram. The signed original can follow by bag.

John Johnson
R B Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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VON WEIZSAECKER, DR RICHARD

Elected President of the Federal Republic of Germany on 23 May in succession to Professor Carstens. He takes up office on 1 July.

Born 1920 in Stuttgart, the son of a career diplomat, Ernst von Weizsaecker (who though not a Nazi was State Secretary at the Foreign Office from 1938-43 and was sentenced by a US tribunal in 1949 for complicity in war crimes).

After a period at Oxford in the family of a Balliol don, Richard von Weizsaecker was called up in 1938 and later served with the infantry on the Eastern front. Came within sight of Moscow in 1941. In 1945 he was with the troops cut off in East Prussia and evacuated to Schleswig-Holstein. When the surrender came he demobilised and went home.

Studied law at Grenoble and Gottingen and helped to defend his father. Entered industry. President of the German Evangelical Church Conference 1964-70 and 1979-81. Member of the Bundestag from 1969-81. Opposed Scheel in the Presidential election of 1974 and did far better than expected. Author of the CDU's 1978 programme of basic principles. A Vice President of the Bundestag 1979-81. Governing Mayor of Berlin 1981-84.

Imported by the Berlin CDU, somewhat at the last moment, to lead the party into the 1979 Berlin elections, he failed to defeat the SPD/FPD coalition, but achieved a record vote for the CDU. Weizsaecker owed his election as Governing Mayor in June 1981 to support from members of the FDP Parliamentary Party, with which his CDU is now in coalition. Elected Deputy Chairman of the Federal CDU in May 1983.



Weizsaecker is respected for his good sense, upright character and charm. An excellent speaker. An effective Governing Mayor. An intellectual and philosopher with a conversational style to match. Liberal views on both domestic policy and Ostpolitik. An old friend of Britain who has given much time to the Koenigswinter Conferences.

Married with four children. Speaks excellent English. Although born a Freiherr (Baron) he prefers not to use his title.



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

1 June 1979

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ser.

Dear Professor Carstens,

I was most grateful for your very kind message and good wishes after my appointment as Prime Minister.

May I, in return, offer you my sincere congratulations on your recent election as President of the Federal Republic of Germany, an office which I know you will fill with distinction.

*Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher*

His Excellency The Federal President Professor Karl Carstens.

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

THE PRIME MINISTER

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

Dr Richard von Weizsaecker
BONN

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

I should like to offer you my warmest congratulations on your election as President of the Federal Republic of Germany. I know that you will be a most distinguished holder of this high office.

mb

Enclosures—flag(s).....