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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

26 October, 1984

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*Prime Minister
useful background to
the Anglo-German summit
CDD*

Dear Charles,

Anglo-German Summit on 2 November: Sir Julian Bullard's

First Impressions

The Foreign Secretary believes that the Prime Minister and other Ministers attending the Anglo-German Summit in Bonn would be interested in these "third impressions" of Sir Julian Bullard.

I am enclosing a copy for you, David Peretz (HM Treasury), Richard Mottram (MOD), John Ballard (DOE), Ivor Llewelyn (MAFF) and to J Alty (Private Secretary to Norman Lamont (DTI)).

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

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THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY: THIRD IMPRESSIONS

Summary

1. The Ambassador's third tour in the Federal Republic. Much unchanged. Many developments, especially in the economy, on lines that were already strongly marked (paragraphs 1-3).
2. The transformation of Berlin since the Quadripartite Agreement of 1971 has continued. West Berlin has a disembodied feel although communications with the Federal Republic have improved and the sense of being cut off from the East seems less strong. East and West Berlin react to each other (paragraphs 4-5).
3. Some things are entirely different in the FRG. The Greens are a new and active political force. The traditional parties are forced to adopt policies, particularly on the environment, in order not to lose further ground. The Greens are likely to remain a significant factor at least until the Federal elections in 1987 (paragraphs 6-8).
4. A more intangible change is the renewed consciousness of German history. No longer so painful to discuss the Nazi period. Guilt now much diminished as a factor in German foreign policy (paragraphs 9-10).
5. A cloud now lifted from Anglo-German relations in the European Community. An enormous undercurrent of bilateral warmth and friendship (paragraph 11).
6. The Christian Democrat/Liberal coalition. Kohl as a reflection of present-day Germany (paragraph 12).
7. Another Anglo-German summit on 2 November. Current German attitudes towards the United Kingdom; German belief that the two countries and the rest of the Community must take seriously the idea of European Union (paragraphs 13-14).

Sir Julian Bullard KCMG



BRITISH EMBASSY,

BONN.

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19 October 1984

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC MP
Secretary of State for Foreign &
Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
London SW1A 2AH

Sir,

THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY: THIRD IMPRESSIONS

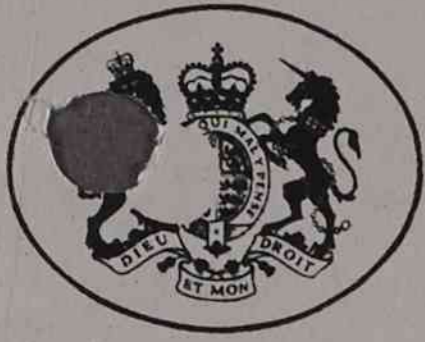
1. I have the honour to send you my impressions of the Federal Republic on returning to that country for a third tour of duty.

2. Much is naturally unchanged since I last served here in 1979. In politics, the norm for a speech is still one hour, the shirt is still usually white, indoor plants still block the view from the Ministerial windows and Hans-Dietrich Genscher is still Foreign Minister. In the arts, taste is still too often outgunned by money: the current production of "The Ring" in Berlin must be the only one in Wagnerian history where the Valkyries make their celebrated entrance in Act 3 wearing black plastic bus-conductors' uniforms and pushing hospital trollies, each with a sheeted corpse. The German language too is still retreating on a broad front in the face of trans-Atlantic idioms: in a government office here last week I was told "Hier wird teamgeworked".

3. Much too has changed only on lines that were already strongly marked in 1979. This applies especially in the economy. The FRG's total foreign trade in both directions was DM 400 milliard 10 years ago, reached DM 600 milliard in 1979 and will be over

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DM 800 milliard this year. Real GNP has also marched ahead, though not so strongly. The annual inflation rate was nearly 7% in 1974, fell to just over 4% in 1979 and stands around 2% today. The only really bad figures are those for unemployment: nearly 600,000 ten years ago, nearly 900,000 five years ago and nearly 2.3 million today. Many businessmen are however worried about the social security system, whether it is not far too generous and how it is to be financed in the longer term; and about this country falling behind in the technology race.

4. Berlin is another place where 1984 looks like 1979, only more so. The great change there came with the Quadripartite Agreement of 1971, which at a stroke removed Berlin from the list of East-West crisis points which for years it had traditionally headed. The transformation noted by Sir Oliver Wright when he became Ambassador in 1975 is even more evident today. West Berlin is at once like and unlike other West German cities. It has the same broad streets and the same department stores. It is a bigger industrial city than any in the Federal Republic. Its Turkish colony is similar, though larger than elsewhere. But there is a certain vacancy about it, a disembodied feeling, due I suppose to the fact that it has no hinterland and is not on the way to anywhere. It reminds me of life after death as described in Michael Frayn's novel "Sweet Dreams".

5. This does not mean that the physical isolation of Berlin is worse than before. On the contrary, the air services from the Federal Republic are better, faster, more comfortable and much more punctual. Traffic by road has become even easier. In the other direction, towards the East, the sense of being cut off is I think less strong today than it was in the 1970s. The wall and the wire are still in place, less crude and more clinical in appearance but serving the same purpose. Visits from West to East have fallen off. But official contacts are more relaxed and the new Governing Mayor shares his predecessor's keen interest



in the GDR. If the two halves have grown apart, they have done so standing back to back and with many a glance over the shoulder. The West Berlin press prints quite a lot of news about events in East Berlin and the GDR. (The GDR press does not need to reciprocate, because most of the population there watch West German television.) When something of interest happens in the east, West German TV reporters rush across and push microphones under the noses of the GDR citizenry, who often show no reluctance to comment. On both sides there is a massive effort of reconstruction and restoration in readiness for the 750th anniversary of Berlin in 1987, with the two municipalities competing but also learning from each other and at some points even collaborating. All these developments were perhaps contained in the situation five years ago, although it would have taken a perceptive eye to see them.

6. More interesting are the things which are entirely different. One of these is the rapid advance in the Federal Republic of the movement known as the Greens. Measured by numbers, these are a substantial force in the land. In the local elections last month in North Rhine Westfalia, an area of 17 million inhabitants, they scored 8.5% overall and much higher figures in the university cities: 12.5% here in Bonn, 15% in Münster. The German system of proportional representation instantly translates such public support into seats in the various assemblies. Thus the Greens have 27 seats out of a total of 520 in the Bundestag itself; 7 out of 110 in the Landtag in Hessen where the regional government is dependent on their support; 9 out of 132 in the Abgeordnetenhaus in Berlin where they are known as the Alternative List.

7. These people are an entirely different element in German politics, and they look it. All their current parliamentary leaders and nearly half their MPs are women. For the rest, when the shirt can be seen through the beard, it is usually not white at all. They are having a considerable effect on policy - not so much by forcing through their own measures, because they prefer

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to stand aside when it is a question of what should be done, but rather by inciting the traditional parties to adopt policies they do not really believe in, simply so as not to lose further ground to the Greens. In 1983 the Government fought off the challenge to INF deployment, spearheaded by the Greens among others. But in 1984 Green pressures have made the Environment an irrestistible political cause: more of a juggernaut than a bandwagon. The measures recently announced to combat Dying Forests by installing compulsory catalysators on motor cars are a good example. The motives here are perhaps one part reason, three parts emotion and six parts political calculation. From behind an influential desk in the Government Press Office I was told that the Cabinet is going to have to go through with these even if it could be shown scientifically that their effect would be purely symbolic.

8. The accepted wisdom is that the Greens are "a passing phenomenon". I agree, but believe that it will take some time to pass. Certainly the Greens and the Alternative List are likely to be a serious factor in German politics at all levels up to and including the Federal elections due in the spring of 1987. And this is a country where Land or Federal elections come round at an average rate of 3 a year.

9. A more intangible but to me very interesting change, compared with a few years ago, is the renewed consciousness of German history and the assertion of the link between this and the modern Federal Republic. It is most evident in "the German question", about which I have recently sent a separate despatch. But that is not the only current example. This year's Berlin Arts Festival has the theme "Berlin 1900", and large crowds gather to watch old films of the Kaiser in a plumed helmet and to walk around affectionate accumulations of period bric-a-brac. Chancellor Kohl's trip to China was reported with fond references

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back to the German colonial period there, which the history books record as having lasted precisely 17 years, from 14 November 1897 to 7 November 1914.

10. A parallel phenomenon is the detachment with which, as it seems to me, Germans nowadays are prepared to discuss aspects of the Nazi period which formerly they used to avoid. In my first week in Bonn a Minister whom I had never met before described to me at my dinner table how as a boy of about 10 he had watched elderly Jews being loaded into lorries in Berlin in 1942; how he had asked what was happening; how a young SS man had said with a laugh that they were all going to be shot; how he had run home hoping to hear some explanation; and how his parents, with horrified expressions, had ordered him never to mention the subject again, or he would get them all sent to a concentration camp. What has happened, I think, is that the period 1933 to 1945 - an extraordinarily short span, considering all that it contained - has now receded far enough into the past to acquire a sort of sepia tone which makes it no longer painful to contemplate. If challenged, those over 60 will give the usual explanations. But those of my age or less, who far outnumber them, speak as if they felt no more responsibility for Hitler's crimes than I do for what happened in 1919 at Amritsar - not that I am putting the two things on the same level. Guilt, I would say, is now much reduced in importance as a factor in German foreign policy.

11. A change of a different kind, but also with profound implications, has occurred in the German perception of the European Community. Since Stuttgart and Fontainebleau the caricature of Britain as the odd man out in Brussels, nagging away about our refunds while everyone else in the room wanted to get on with building Europe, has definitely begun to fade. I see German heads nodding agreement when I say that the unhappy years of argument are behind us, that in a sense everybody now

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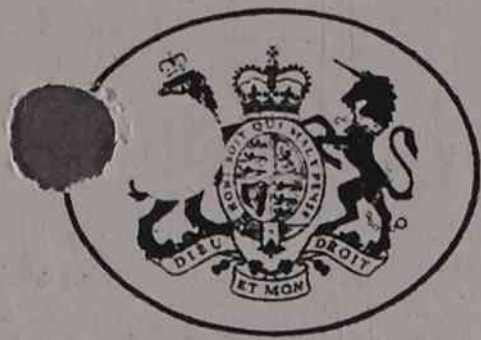
is singing our song (discipline) and that the Community must now move into the new terrain for which a few maps already exist: Snr Spinelli's draft treaty, President Mitterrand's speech at Strasbourg and the Prime Minister's much more practical paper "Europe - The Future". (I can now add to the list your own speech here on 17 October.) This change of scenery, together with the departure of one or two bilious figures from the Foreign Ministry here, has given me a much easier start here than my two predecessors had in their time. In Düsseldorf, Hanover and Munich, as well as in Bonn itself, I have been conscious of the enormous under current of warmth and friendship which runs through the whole pattern of Anglo-German relations. But see paragraph 14 below.

12. I have left to the last the most important change of all, the installation in 1982 of a Christian Democrat-Liberal coalition in place of the Social Democrat-Liberal government which had held office since 1969. There could hardly be two men more different than Helmut Schmidt and Helmut Kohl, and it is easy to see how one could have so badly underestimated the other. Schmidt I need not describe. Kohl seems to me much more typical both of his own party and of the country as a whole. Talkative, and enthusiastic,

His current standing in the opinion polls reflects this. But his professional record as a politician takes some beating. He is a bit over-weight and his suits do not fit too well. But there is a big, strong, confident, energetic man inside them, and a friendly one too. This is rather how Germany itself strikes me.

13. A fortnight today the Prime Minister and you will be coming to Bonn for the twice-yearly Anglo-German Summit meeting - the sixteenth since this series was inaugurated by Mr James Callaghan in 1977. In Hanover last week I mentioned this to

/ Albrecht,



Albrecht, the Prime Minister of Lower Saxony and himself a possible future Chancellor. I said that if asked to describe current German attitudes towards my country I thought of answering in the following terms: no significant bilateral problems: friendship and regard for Britain as a partner and ally: respect for the Prime Minister and for the consistency and resolution with which she is carrying out especially her economic policies: relief at the closing of the unhappy chapter of argument in the European Community: a network of Anglo-German contacts far too intensive and extensive for any Embassy to be able to keep track of them, much less have any influence on them: and an incomplete awareness of Britain's importance to Germany, actual and potential.

14. Albrecht concurred, but asked me to add a seventh point: a feeling among Germans of all ages and political parties that if our two countries were to maintain their position in the world, they and the rest of the Community must take seriously the idea of European union. I think that this was a shrewd comment, and that it would pay us to re-read the passages on this subject in the speech which the Prime Minister heard Herr Kohl deliver in the Examination Schools in Oxford on 2 May 1984. The key sentences were as follows: "... The question in the coming months and years will be: Is every partner in the Community ready, even in the most difficult times, to consider its membership of the Community as irreversible? We certainly are. Are all partners ready, without ifs and buts, to tread the path to the political union of Europe? The Federal Republic certainly is. I hope that the answer of all other partners in the Community to these two decisive questions is the same as ours".

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I am sending copies of this despatch to HM Representatives at NATO, the EC and the UN in New York; in NATO and EC capitals; Moscow and East Berlin; to the Commanders in Chief's Committee (Germany) and to the British Commandant in Berlin and our Consuls General in the Federal Republic.

I am Sir,
Yours faithfully

J L Bullard

J L Bullard

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