

Germany

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MY TELNO 1019: DISSOLUTION OF THE BUNDESTAG
SUMMARY

1. The stage now seems set for Federal elections on 6 March 1983. German Ministers will henceforth be increasingly preoccupied with the election campaign.

DETAIL

2. Chancellor Kohl informed President Carstens yesterday that he would be seeking a vote of confidence in the Bundestag on 17 December. The Chancellor intends deliberately to lose this vote and will then request the President to dissolve the Bundestag. In this way, the Chancellor hopes to fulfil the commitment, made when he assumed office last October, to hold early Federal elections on 6 March.

3. The CDU/CSU and FDP Parliamentary parties, and the Chairman of the SPD Parliamentary party, were also informed yesterday of the Chancellor's intentions. The CDU/CSU and FDP both agreed to the Chancellor's proposals, and to abstain with the CDU in next week's vote of confidence (though there may be one or two FDP dissenters). The SPD will vote against. The motion is therefore certain to be lost.

4. The decision on whether the Bundestag should then be dissolved lies solely with the President. Although there have been doubts about the constitutionality of dissolution after a deliberately lost vote of confidence, the Coalition parties both confidently expect President Carstens to agree to the Chancellor's request. The President has up to 21 days in which to make up his mind. He is widely expected to dissolve the Bundestag in the first week of January.

5. A handful of FDP and SPD MPs (who want to avoid early elections) have said that, if the President agrees to a dissolution, they will seek to have his decision reversed by the Constitutional Court. Both the CDU/CSU and FDP, however, are confident that such an appeal would be turned down by the Court. It is most unlikely, therefore, to delay the elections. Any delay would be no more than a week or so.

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