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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister

19 July 1984

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19/7*

Dear Charles,

Herr Genscher telephoned the Secretary of State at 0930 today to follow-up the question put to him by Sir J Taylor yesterday as to what was behind the news report that the German Government had expressed its support for M. Delors as the next President of the Commission.

Genscher recalled that in the past the Germans had on several occasions said they intended to put forward a candidate of their own. In the event, however, they had decided that it would make sense for Biedenkopf to start as Commissioner and Vice-President. The Chancellor had, therefore, told President Mitterrand that he could agree to Delors as the next President, but that the Germans would expect Delors' successor to come from the Federal Republic.

In discussion, Sir Geoffrey and Genscher agreed that Delors was a very able candidate and would do a good job as President.

Genscher offered no clue as to how long the Germans expect Biedenkopf to serve as Vice-President before moving on to the top job. Sir Geoffrey naturally did no more than take note, making no comment either on Biedenkopf or on the reported arrangement between the French and the Germans. We should clearly reserve judgement on Biedenkopf for the moment, and look at his candidacy later in the light of his performance meanwhile.

We must in any case surely regard the formal German position as resting with the message from Kohl relayed to No 10 yesterday by Neuer.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

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Private Secretary

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