

CONFIDENTIAL



Germany

Copied to: BROADCASTING
Foreign Language
: BBC ~~Foreign Language~~ Service. May 1979.
10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

25 May 1979

RF 8-6-79

Dear Paul,

Call on the Prime Minister by the Governing
Mayor of Berlin on 25 May 1979.

RF answered on
: Broadcasting; BBC
Foreign Language Service:
May 1979.

The Governing Mayor of Berlin, Herr Stobbe, called on the Prime Minister at No. 10 at 1015 this morning, accompanied by the FRG Ambassador and others.

I enclose a copy of my note of the Prime Minister's conversation with Herr Stobbe. I should be grateful if you would give it the restricted distribution appropriate to Prime Ministerial records.

You will see that the Prime Minister expressed the view to Herr Stobbe that there should be no economies in UK or Western broadcasts to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. I should be grateful if you would let me know, for the Prime Minister's information, whether any cuts have recently been made in the BBC's service to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe or if any cuts are planned.

I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosure to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,
Bryan Cartledge.

Paul Lever, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

gn

CONFIDENTIAL

cc Master Set

RECORD OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S CONVERSATION WITH THE GOVERNING
MAYOR OF BERLIN, HERR DIETRICH STOBBE, AT 10 DOWNING STREET
ON 25 MAY 1979 at 1015

Present:

Prime Minister

Mr. F.R. MacGinnis
(BMG Berlin)

Mr. B.G. Cartledge

Herr Dietrich Stobbe

H.E. the Ambassador of the FRG

Herr Gerhard Kunze
(Senate Chancellery)

Dr. Hermann Meyn
(Senate Spokesman)

Herr Jorg Henschel
(Deputy Senate Spokesman)

When the Prime Minister had welcomed the Governing Mayor, Herr Stobbe said that he had spoken to Chancellor Schmidt about the Chancellor's recent talks with the Prime Minister; the Chancellor had told him that the commitment of the UK to defend the freedom of Berlin was absolute. The Prime Minister said that this was so: the UK's commitment to Berlin was total. Herr Stobbe explained that, since his city was so dependent on the policies of other countries, he was naturally anxious to know the position of the new British Government. The Prime Minister told Herr Stobbe that he need have no concern whatsoever.

After a discussion of the events which had been arranged to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the end of the Berlin Blockade, Herr Stobbe said that all Berliners knew to whom they owed their freedom and their security. The Prime Minister said that the decision of the West to mount the airlift had been a decision to defend freedom against tyranny. The West should never be, and did not need to be, on the defensive: not only was the Western system the best but the moral case for freedom

/for which

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-2-

for which the West stood was incontestable. Herr Stobbe agreed and said that since Berlin lived within a framework of treaties, everything depended on the military balance between East and West; he would therefore be interested to hear the Prime Minister's view on the SALT II and SALT III negotiations.

The Prime Minister said that she had discussed the SALT treaty with Chancellor Schmidt. Like him, she hoped that the treaty would be ratified, since if it was not, the general uncertainty would be such as to produce damaging effects. The British Government was, of course, also deeply interested in SALT III since this negotiation would deal with the problem of the SS20 missile - a weapon which was tactical in name but not in fact. Herr Stobbe said that if SALT II were not ratified by the United States, the consequences for Berlin could be very serious. The Prime Minister said that she had found her discussions with Mr. Vance earlier in the week on these matters very helpful. She asked whether the forthcoming European elections would have an unsettling effect on the situation in Berlin.

Herr Stobbe explained that Berlin was the only region which, under the Treaty of Rome, would not directly elect representatives to the European Parliament. Instead, the House of Representatives in Berlin would send Deputies to the new Assembly, on the FRG list. This was not ideal, but Berlin had to live with realities. He hoped that the Soviet Union would recognise that the Western powers had handled the matter in such a way as to show respect for Berlin's special status; but the Soviet reaction remained uncertain. There could be minor disturbances around Berlin during the weeks ahead. The UK and the US had recently made diplomatic representations of the Soviet Union, to the effect that it would be better if nobody were to cause trouble in the period immediately prior to the US/Soviet Summit in Vienna.

CONFIDENTIAL

/Herr Stobbe

CONFIDENTIAL

-3-

Herr Stobbe said he was nevertheless apprehensive over the possibility that the Soviet Union might do nothing but leave it to the GDR to take such measures as they wished - for example, preventing Berlin's Parliamentary Deputies from crossing GDR territory. If this happened, he hoped that the three Western powers would make their views known unequivocally. The Bonn Group had drawn up a list of possible contingencies, one of which was the incorporation of the Eastern Sector of Berlin into the GDR. Meanwhile, Berlin could only wait upon events and keep calm.

Herr Stobbe went on to say that in all other respects Berlin was doing quite well; the last two years had been the calmest of the post-war period. In general, detente worked well for Berlin and the Quadripartite Agreements had helped the city a great deal in practical ways; for example, more than 25 million people had now crossed the wall which divided the city to visit friends or relatives. The overall policy of dealing with Eastern Europe by means of treaties had produced good results for Berliners.

The Prime Minister said that this policy was fine so long as the West did not retreat. The British Government favoured detente, so long as it was two way and backed by a strong defence. The West must always be in a position to negotiate from strength. The Eastern bloc had an advantage in the diversity of means by which it pursued its objectives, for example by using proxies such as the Cubans and the East Germans in Africa and the Middle East. The West had to keep a very close watch on these tactics. There was now great uncertainty as to what would happen in the Soviet Union after Brezhnev's departure: it would be important to keep the process of detente going during this period.

/Herr Stobbe

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-4-

Herr Stobbe said that he was particularly concerned about the situation in the GDR itself and by, for example, the action which had recently been taken against journalists there. The GDR regime was nervous, especially about the activities of the intellectuals and the position was not stable. The Prime Minister commented that the activities of the so-called dissidents in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were very encouraging for those who believed that the human spirit would ultimately survive in adversity. Herr Stobbe agreed. The Prime Minister went on to say that the weakness of the Soviet system was the lack of any provision for proper succession to the leadership - there were no elections, just a power struggle. Even if a collective leadership were to take over from Brezhnev, it would not last but would end in the victory of the strongest.

Herr Stobbe said that Berliners hoped that the UK, the United States and France would maintain their presence in Berlin and their commitment to their own rights which derived from the war period; this was the only effective response to the Soviet Union. He thanked the Prime Minister for the UK's commitment and support. The Prime Minister said that the commitment was to freedom as well as to Berlin: the position had held much longer than anyone would have expected thirty years ago. The Prime Minister went on to say that she thought it wrong to make any economies in UK or Western broadcasts to the countries of the Warsaw Pact. Technological improvements now made it possible to beam Western ideas to the East more effectively than before and Western Governments must never economise on this. Dissidents from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe who had visited her had always urged that Western broadcasts should concentrate on serious discussion - they did not like too much valuable broadcasting time to be taken up by music.

/Herr Stobbe

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 5 -

Herr Stobbe asked the Prime Minister if there would be any changes in the UK's bilateral relations with the Soviet Union. The Prime Minister repeated that the UK favoured detente, so long as it was two way, and would judge by the actions of the Soviet Government rather than by its words. The next CSCE meeting would have to be tackled seriously and the Soviet Union taken up on the question of freedom of movement. The Belgrade meeting had been important as it was the first time that the other Warsaw Pact countries had seen the Soviet Union to be in the dock for its policies. Herr Stobbe agreed that the CSCE meeting in Madrid would be very important for Berlin.

In conclusion, Herr Stobbe wished the Prime Minister every success for her Government and for the UK. He greatly hoped that the Prime Minister would be able to visit Berlin. The Prime Minister replied that she would very much like to do so, although it might not be possible in the immediate future.

The conversation ended at 1050.

Byrd.

25 May 1979

CONFIDENTIAL