

Germany

CONFIDENTIAL

GRS 430

CONFIDENTIAL

FM BONN 291745Z APR 80

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 366 OF 29 APRIL

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, PARIS, UKDEL NATO

Read in full
mo

SCHMIDT'S VISIT TO MOSCOW

1. BOTH VON STADEN AND VAN WELL EMPHASISED TO ME TODAY THAT SCHMIDT HAS STILL NOT FINALLY MADE UP HIS MIND ABOUT WHETHER TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION TO MOSCOW. VAN WELL TOLD ME THAT THE TWO MAIN FACTORS AFFECTING HIS DECISION WOULD BE: FIRST, THE ADVICE HE RECEIVED FROM HIS FELLOW HEADS OF GOVERNMENT: HE WOULD NOT GO UNLESS HE WAS SATISFIED THAT HE HAD THE FULL SUPPORT OF HIS MAIN ALLIES. SECONDLY, HE WOULD NEED TO BE ASSURED BY HIS STAFF THAT THERE WOULD BE THE POSSIBILITY OF ACHIEVING WORTH-WHILE RESULTS DURING HIS VISIT. THE TIMING REMAINS SOMETIME BETWEEN AFTER THE VENICE SUMMIT AND THE OLYMPICS THEMSELVES. PUBLIC OPINION IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC IS OVERWHELMINGLY IN FAVOUR OF SUCH A VISIT. THIS ITSELF PRESENTS SCHMIDT WITH A DILEMMA: IF HE REFUSES, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN HIS REFUSAL TO PUBLIC OPINION: IF HE GOES, HE HAS TO BRING BACK SOMETHING ACCEPTABLE TO PUBLIC OPINION.

2. I REALISE THAT THERE WILL BE MANY WIDE-RANGING CONSIDERATIONS WHICH WILL AFFECT THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY TO THE CHANCELLOR. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ANGLO/GERMAN RELATIONS, HOWEVER, IT CAN ONLY DO GOOD IF THE REPLY ENCOURAGES HIM TO GO TO MOSCOW. TO BEGIN WITH IT IS WHAT HE WANTS TO DO, BOTH FOR POLITICAL REASONS AND ALSO BECAUSE HE GENUINELY FEELS THAT EAST-WEST COMMUNICATIONS HAVE BROKEN DOWN AND NEED TO BE RE-ESTABLISHED. SECONDLY, IT WILL FLATTER HIS EGO AFTER THE BATTERING IT HAS RECEIVED AT LUXEMBOURG. THIRDLY, IT WILL BE A MARK OF BRITISH CONFIDENCE IN HIM AT A TIME WHEN HE NEEDS A BIT OF A BOOST TO MORALE. MOREOVER, WHATEVER THE PRESSURES HE MAY BE UNDER FROM HIS OWN PARTY, SCHMIDT HIMSELF IS ENOUGH OF A REALIST ABOUT THE RUSSIANS TO BE RELIED UPON NOT TO LET THE SIDE DOWN. MOREOVER, WE CAN DO OURSELVES A BIT OF GOOD WITH THE GERMANS IF WE CAN HELP TO BRING ROUND THE AMERICANS. THE PROBLEM WILL BE TO FIND A SUBJECT OF SUBSTANCE ON WHICH TO MAKE PROGRESS. ARMS CONTROL MAY BE ONE SUCH SUBJECT.

CONFIDENTIAL

/ 3. I SUGGEST

CONFIDENTIAL

3. I SUGGEST THEREFORE THAT ELEMENTS OF ANY REPLY MIGHT INCLUDE:-

- A) ENCOURAGEMENT TO TAKE UP THE INVITATION:
 - B) SUITABLY FLATTERING REFERENCES TO HIS UNIQUE POSITION OF AUTHORITY WITHIN THE ALLIANCE: AND
 - C) THE SUGGESTION THAT, BEFORE FINALLY MAKING UP HIS MIND HE MIGHT WANT TO PREPARE THE GROUND BY SENDING ONE OF HIS COLLABORATORS TO MOSCOW TO EXAMINE THE LIKELIHOOD OF USEFUL RESULTS.
- SINCE VAN WELL IS LIKELY TO BE THE PATHFINDER IN ANY CASE, THIS WOULD HAVE THE ADDED VIRTUE OF ENCOURAGING SCHMIDT TO DO WHAT HE WANTS TO DO IN THE WAY HE WANTS TO DO IT, WITHOUT, IN MY JUDGEMENT, ANY REAL DANGER OF HIS SELLING PASSES.

WRIGHT

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION

WED
EESD
ECD
NEWS D
OID
IPD
CABINET OFFICE