



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

12 December 1980

Briefing folder.
Paul

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your letter of 1 December about the call on the Prime Minister by Herr Dietrich Stobbe, the Governing Mayor of Berlin, at 0930 on 17 December.

A brief on Berlin for the Prime Minister's use is attached. At the present time of tension in East-West relations, the Governing Mayor will wish to be able to tell Berliners that the Prime Minister has reaffirmed Britain's total commitment to the city. Herr Stobbe will also be interested to hear the Prime Minister's views on East-West relations and on the prospects for the new US Administration, as well as on the outlook for the British economy.

Herr Stobbe will be accompanied by the Federal German Ambassador, Herr Peter Soetje (Head of the Senat Chancellery), and Dr Hermann Meyn (Senat Press Spokesman). I suggest that from the British side, Mr Francis MacGinnis (Minister, British Military Government, Berlin) should also attend.

Herr Stobbe arrives on 14 December. On 15 December he will visit Edinburgh and North Sea oil installations. On 16 December he will visit York. On 17 December he will also call on Lord Carrington and the Lord Privy Seal, who will give a lunch in his honour.

Personality notes on Herr Stobbe, Herr Soetje, Dr Meyn and the FRG Ambassador are attached.

Yours etc

Paul

(P Lever)

Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing St

VISIT OF THE GOVERNING MAYOR OF BERLIN, HERR DIETRICH STOBBE

Points to Make

1. Welcome. Re-affirm total UK commitment to Berlin.
 2. Glad Berlin not directly affected by East-West tension following Afghanistan and the Polish crisis. Russians so far obviously not interested in additional problems there. Tribute to the firm, yet circumspect approach pursued by the Allies, the FRG and the Senat over the years. But we can't afford to relax. Intervention in Poland could spell trouble for Berlin.
 3. Deplore the recent increase in the minimum exchange requirement by the GDR. As the Lord Privy Seal described it in Berlin, a setback to human contacts which affects especially the old and those with families. Why did they do it?
 4. Glad also that the Berlin economy continues to do well. What are the main problems?
 5. Welcome the continued excellent working relationship between the Allies and the Senat. Certain that, under your leadership, this will continue.
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VISIT OF THE GOVERNING MAYOR OF BERLIN, HERR DIETRICH STOBBE

Essential Facts

1. Herr Stobbe's visit was mooted in June, before the Polish crisis reminded Berliners of their exposed position. Stobbe was then concerned by signs that the years of relative calm following the signing of the Quadripartite Agreement in 1971 had lessened Berliners' perception of the importance of the Allied presence and their guarantee. He wishes demonstratively to emphasise this importance. He will wish to be able to say that the British guarantee is as firm as ever.
2. Berlin is at present leading a charmed life, unaffected by the general tension in East-West relations. The Russians regularly stress their interest in a calm situation there, and, despite a slight increase in the tempo of protests in recent months over traditional issues, they have been constructive in negotiation and flexible in routine business.
3. On 13 October, the GDR drastically increased the minimum hard currency exchange requirement for non-Socialist (mainly FRG) visitors to the GDR. The standard sum nearly doubled; pensioners, previously exempt, now pay the full amount and children, also previously exempt, pay a proportion. A special rate for East Berlin was abolished. By doing this the GDR, faced with turmoil in Poland, probably hoped to cut down Western influence, reduce the drain on economic resources by visitors, and reassure the Russians. The number of visits has declined by 60% in Berlin and by about 50% from the FRG overall. The FRG and its Allies, including the UK, publicly condemned this step; but the FRG did not take counter-measures, for fear of reducing Inner-German contacts even more. The deterioration of Inner-German relations seems now to have been halted; the GDR has granted agrément to the successor of the present FRG Permanent Representative in East Berlin.

/But

But the FRG anticipates no real improvement until the Polish situation stabilises. Herr Stobbe fears that a visible failure of the FRG's Inner-German policy of developing relations by agreements and small practical steps, could revive nationalist sentiments in West Germany.

4. The Defence Secretary visited Berlin in February and the Lord Privy Seal at the end of October. Both visits were highly successful, and welcomed as a sign of Britain's commitment. Our rôle in Berlin is a major positive factor in Anglo-German relations.

5. The Berlin economy is doing well (indeed better than that of the FRG). Progress has been made under Herr Stobbe's leadership to rationalise and restructure. The main internal problems relate to the provision of housing and the integration of immigrants (which form 10% of the population; 50% of these are Turks).

6. Herr Stobbe made a good start when he took over in 1977, attracting new investment, and pursuing a cautious and sensible political line. But since his re-election in March 1979, and particularly this year, his political stock has fallen. His attempt to combine the offices of Governing Mayor and Berlin SPD Party Chairman has not been successful and he is increasingly assailed by both wings of his own party. Too often his political judgment has proved faulty. This was particularly marked during the recent strike by the West Berlin employees of the (East German operated) Reichsbahn, which operates the city's rail links with the FRG and the surface local railway network (S-Bahn). Nevertheless, Allied/Senat cooperation remains generally excellent. No substitute for Herr Stobbe is in sight. He will wish to be able to present his visit to Britain as a personal and political success, and it is in our interests that he should be able to do so.



STOBBE, DIETRICH

Governing Mayor (SPD), Berlin, since May 1977. Chairman of the Berlin SPD since June 1979.

Born 1938 in Weepers (East Prussia). Experienced the Russian invasion in 1944 and the expulsion of Germans in 1945. Grew up in Stade, North Germany, before studying politics at the Free University, Berlin. Joined the SPD in 1960, a step motivated by his admiration for Willy Brandt and the Bad Godesberg programme. 1961 and 1965 worked in Brandt's election campaign team in West Germany. 1962 Constituency Business Manager of the SPD in the Borough of Charlottenburg. 1963-66 Personal Assistant and Press Secretary to the then Senator for Youth and Sport, Neubauer. 1966-67 spent a year in business at the Kindl Brauerei. Since 1976 member of Berlin House of Representatives. 1967-73 Business Manager of Parliamentary Party. 1973-77 Senator for Federal Affairs.

Throughout his career Stobbe has displayed intelligence, moderation and fairness. Although he stands on the right of the SPD he has worked consistently for integration within the party. His nomination (rather against the odds) as Governing Mayor on the resignation of Klaus Schutz in 1977 reflected his acceptability to all factions of the party. As Senator for Federal Affairs he was successful in furthering the close degree of cooperation necessary between the Senate and the Federal Government and established good relationship with the Federal Chancellor as well as with the Allies in Berlin and Bonn. Despite the SPD/FDP victory in the 1979 elections, the SPD's failure to improve its showing by more than 0.1% has been attributed by many to Stobbe's uncertain touch and lack of leadership. Following the election Stobbe, against some opposition, was elected Chairman of the SPD. He put himself forward to prevent a left/right split in the party.

Speaks fluent French and English. Visited UK as guest of HMG in 1972 and annually after his appointment as Senator for Federal Affairs in 1973. Visited UK as Governing Mayor in 1977 and 1979. Married with two children.

DR JURGEN RUHFUS

Dr Ruhfus was born on 4 August 1930 in Bochum. He is married with three children.

After university studies in law and management, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1955 and served in Geneva, Dakar and Athens. He was a highly successful Ambassador to Kenya from 1970-73. After 3 years as Assistant Under-Secretary in charge of European and politico/military affairs in the Foreign Office in Bonn, he was transferred to the Federal Chancellor's Office. For the past 3 years he has been the Chancellor's principal foreign policy adviser and appears to have gained Herr Schmidt's full confidence. He has been consistently helpful and frank in discussion with members of HM Embassy, a reliable guide to the Chancellor's thinking and to the lines on which German policies were likely to develop. His attitude to Britain, always friendly, became warmer still in the immediate aftermath of the Mogadishu hijacking episode in which he was very closely involved.

The fact that Herr Ruhfus has been appointed Ambassador in London is a sign of the importance the Federal Government attaches to Anglo-German relations. Of all the senior officials who might have been considered, he is probably the ablest and undoubtedly has the closest relationship with the Federal Chancellor. He is still comparatively young, immensely hardworking, and almost certainly will continue to have a distinguished career ahead of him after London. He spent some time in England as a young man, and it is probably from those days that he acquired his understanding of, and liking for, Britain.

He speaks excellent English.

Western European Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

February 1980



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SÖTJE, PETER

Head of Senate Chancellery (SPD) since April 1979.

Born 1941 in Rendsburg. 1961-62 studied law and political science in Freiburg. 1962-66 studied political science in Free University, Berlin. 1967-71 Personal Assistant to Senator for Families, Youth and Sports. 1971-75 Councillor for Youth and Sport in the Borough of Neuköln. 1977-79 Senate Spokesman and Head of Senate Press Department. Co-Author of a widely publicised discussion paper (1976) on party theory and practice. Political right-hand man('Chefideologe') of the Governing Mayor.

A hard worker and intensely loyal. Happier and more successful in his present position than he was as Spokesman. Understanding and cooperative in his dealings with the Allies.

Married. Two children. Speaks some English.

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MEYN, DR HERMANN

Senate Spokesman (SPD) since May 1979.

Born 1934 in Bremervoerde. 1957-61 studied Political Science at Free University, Berlin. 1961-64 News Editor at Rias Radio Station. 1964-69 Research Assistant at Institute for Publicistics of Free University Berlin. 1969-72 Political Editor at the Spiegel in Hamburg. 1972-79 Chief Editor of the official organ of the German journalists' Union (DJV), 'Journalist'. Member of the SPD since 1964. Appointed to present post in the Senate reshuffle following the elections of 18 March 1979.

Married. One child.

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Germany

1 December 1980

Ref 15.12.80

Thank you for your letter of 27 November to Michael Alexander about the visit of the Governing Mayor of Berlin.

As I told Chris Jebb this morning, the Prime Minister will see Herr Stobbe for half an hour at 0930 on 17 December. I should be grateful if you could let us have suitable briefing by close of play on 15 December.

M. A. PATTISON

Paul Lever, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

RH

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Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

*17 December is a bad
day for you but you would
fit in the Mayor at 09.30
on 17 Dec. After?*

27 November 1980

Dear Michael,

*Yes Mr.
- 28/11*

Visit by the Governing Mayor of Berlin

The Governing Mayor of Berlin, Herr Stobbe, has been invited to visit Britain as the guest of the Government from 15-17 December. It is customary for the Governing Mayor to pay fairly frequent visits to Allied capitals. On this occasion he will spend the first two days of his visit in Scotland and the North of England. On 17 December, he will call on the Lord Privy Seal at 12.15, and Sir Ian Gilmour will then host a lunch in his honour.

We also hope to arrange a call by him on the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

During his last visit to London, on 25 May 1979, Herr Stobbe was received by the Prime Minister. This was in accordance with our practice of many years' standing whereby the Governing Mayor in office is received by the Prime Minister of the day when visiting London (he is also regularly received by US and French Presidents when visiting Washington and Paris).

Berlin has so far not been directly affected by the deterioration in East-West relations which followed the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, nor by events in Poland. Nevertheless, Berliners are acutely aware of their vulnerable position, and demonstrations of support by the Protecting Powers will be particularly valued at the present time. Our role in Berlin gains us great credit with the Federal German Government, as was demonstrated most recently by the highly positive reaction in both Berlin and Bonn to the visit which the Lord Privy Seal paid to the City on 31 October.

Lord Carrington therefore hopes that the Prime Minister will be able to receive Herr Stobbe for a short talk. I understand that, despite the Prime Minister's heavy programme on 17 December, it might be possible to fit in a call. Could you please let me know whether this will, in fact, be possible and if so, at what time? Herr Stobbe would be accompanied by the Federal German Ambassador, by one or two of his senior officials, and by the Minister in the British Military Government, Berlin.

Yours etc

Paul

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street

(P Lever)
Private Secretary