

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

DISTRIBUTION SELECTED
FILE COPY

FM BONN

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 796

OF 120815Z SEPTEMBER 86

INFO PRIORITY MODUK, PARIS, WASHINGTON, UKDEL NATO,

INFO SAVING CONSULATES GENERAL FRG, BMG BERLIN



VISIT TO BRITISH FORCES GERMANY (BFG) BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND
CHANCELLOR KOHL, 17 SEPTEMBER

SUMMARY

1. THE VISIT GOT GOOD PUBLICITY HERE AND CAN BE SAID TO HAVE
ACHIEVED ITS AIMS. KOHL AND HIS PARTY WERE DEEPLY IMPRESSED.

DETAIL

2. THE PRIME MINISTER AND CHANCELLOR KOHL SPENT 17 SEPTEMBER
VISITING BRITISH FORCES GERMANY IN THE FIELD. MR YOUNGER AND DR
WOERNER ACCOMPANIED THEM, TOGETHER WITH THE CDS AND FROM THE GERMAN
SIDE THE INSPECTOR OF THE ARMY (CGS EQUIVALENT), SOME LOCAL MPS AND
OTHERS. THIS WAS KOHL'S FIRST VISIT TO BFG. THE COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF,
WHOSE DAY IT WAS, WILL NO DOUBT BE SENDING THEIR IMPRESSIONS.

3. FROM MY POINT OF VIEW THIS VISIT HAD THREE PURPOSES:-

(A) TO BRING HOME TO KOHL AS VIVIDLY AS POSSIBLE THE QUALITY OF BFG
AND THE VITAL ROLE THEY PLAY:

(B) TO REMIND THE GERMAN PUBLIC AT LARGE OF THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTION
MADE BY BRITAIN TO THE DEFENCE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC:

(C) TO DEMONSTRATE SYMBOLICALLY AND GRAPHICALLY THE INTERDEPENDENCE
OF OUR DEFENCE EFFORT IN THE FRG.

4. I BELIEVE WE SUCCEEDED VERY WELL ON (A), AND ADEQUATELY ON (B).
ON (C) WE NOW HAVE A LANDMARK WHICH WE MUST ALL WORK TO KEEP
VISIBLE.

PROGRAMME

5. KOHL WAS GIVEN AN IMPRESSIVE BRIEFING ON THE THREAT AND BFG'S
ABILITY TO MEET IT. THE DISCUSSION WHICH THIS SET OFF, THOUGH BRIEF,
WAS ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE PARTS OF THE VISIT. BUT THE MAIN AIM
WAS TO SEE THE FORCES IN THE FIELD. THE 2 HEADS OF GOVERNMENT
WATCHED A TANK DEMONSTRATION AT FALLINGBOSTEL, INVOLVING BOTH
CHALLENGER AND GERMAN LEOPARD II. THEY WERE TELEVIEWED IN THE TURRETS
OF THEIR RESPECTIVE NATIONAL TANKS, FIRED THEIR GUNS AND EACH SCORED
A DIRECT HIT. THEY WATCHED A HARRIER DEMONSTRATION BY RAF GERMANY.

CONFIDENTIAL

/THEY

CONFIDENTIAL

THEY MET A WIDE RANGE OF BFG PERSONNEL OF ALL RANKS, AND SOME FROM THE BUNDESVEHR.

MEDIA

6. THE DAY'S EVENTS PROVIDED IDEAL TARGETS FOR THE TELEVISION CAMERAS AND THERE WAS GOOD COVERAGE HERE, ESPECIALLY ON THE LATE NEWS BROADCASTS. AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE KOHL SPOKE WARMLY OF THE ANGLO/GERMAN DEFENCE COOPERATION AND EXPRESSED ADMIRATION FOR THE HIGH STANDARD OF BFG'S TRAINING. THE PRESS HAD WIDESPREAD PHOTOGRAPHIC COVERAGE, THOUGH NOT MANY COLUMN INCHES OF TEXT. THE REGIONAL PRESS WILL NO DOUBT GIVE WIDER COVERAGE, INCLUDING ON THE QUESTION OF TRAINING AT SOLTAU-LUENEBURG. ON THIS KOHL WAS MORE ROBUST THAN WOERNER IN EXPLAINING THE NEED TO TRAIN. "FREEDOM CANNOT BE HAD FREE OF CHARGE".

COMMENT

7. KOHL'S OFFICE HAVE TOLD ME THAT HE CAME AWAY DEEPLY IMPRESSED. (WOERNER'S STAFF SAY THE SAME OF HIM, WHICH IN A WAY IS AN EVEN GREATER COMPLIMENT.) KOHL BEING THE MAN HE IS, THE VISIT WILL HAVE DONE MORE THAN MANY HOURS OF TALKING OR READING COULD EVER ACHIEVE TO PRINT IN HIS MIND THE PICTURE OF BRITISH FORCES AS TOP QUALITY, DEEPLY COMMITTED PROFESSIONALS DEFENDING ONE OF THE MOST VULNERABLE POINTS OF THE INNER-GERMAN BORDER. ASSUMING KOHL CONTINUES TO LEAD GERMANY FOR ANOTHER FOUR YEARS, THE EFFORT PUT INTO ARRANGING THE VISIT WILL HAVE BEEN AN EXCELLENT INVESTMENT.

BULLARD

YYYY

BONN WILL PASS SAVING TO C-GS AND BMG BERLIN

BPLNAN 2161

LIMITED

WED

SOVIET D.

EED

DEFENCE D.

PLANNING STAFF

NEWS D.

INFO D.

NAD

RESEARCH D.

PS

PS/LADY YOUNG

PS/MR RENTON

PS/PUS

MR DEREK THOMAS

MR GOODALL

MR RATFORD

MR DAUNT

COPIES SENT TO
NO 10 DOWNING STREET

TREATED AS REQUESTED

-2-
CONFIDENTIAL