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GERMANY: Visits by Governing
Mayors of West Berlin:

10 DOWNING STREET

March 1979

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

16 December 1986

Dear Col.,

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE GOVERNING MAYOR OF BERLIN

The Prime Minister saw the Governing Mayor of Berlin for a talk this morning. Herr Diepgen was accompanied by the Federal German Ambassador and by Herr Stronk. Mr. Michael Burton was also present. Herr Diepgen spoke partly in German and partly in English. The meeting was perfectly amiable - unlike the occasion two years ago - although the Prime Minister commented afterwards that she found Herr Diepgen rather over-addicted to the jargon of détente.

Situation in Berlin

In response to the Prime Minister's invitation, Herr Diepgen gave an account of the situation in Berlin. A strong defence was vital to provide the external security within which Berlin could flourish. The city had experienced a marked economic upswing since his last visit to London. The main factors in this were the establishment of new industries and demographic trends. Berlin had created more new jobs than any other part of the Federal Republic. Krushchev had once boasted that Berlin would drop into his lap like a rotten fruit. In fact the city was more secure and more prosperous than ever. This was evident in the fact that more people were now moving from elsewhere in the Federal Republic to West Berlin than in the opposite direction. Berlin was increasingly attractive as a source of jobs and for its cultural life and vitality, especially with young people. His intention was to use the 750th Anniversary of Berlin next year to underline the city's success, with the two watchwords of quality and performance. The Prime Minister complimented Herr Diepgen on Berlin's economic success.

Asylum Seekers

The Prime Minister enquired about the problem of asylum seekers crossing from East Berlin. Herr Diepgen said that the problem had now diminished in local terms. But the basic problem was one of relations between industrialised and developing countries, and would remain a source of difficulty. He himself would like to see a harmonisation of law dealing with aliens throughout the European Community. The Prime

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Minister said that there had been some discussion of this at the European Council. It had been agreed that freer movement within Europe depended on more effective controls at the Community's external frontiers. It was necessary to take a firm line on immigration into the Community.

Draft Dodgers

The Prime Minister recalled that Herr Diepgen had been much exercised at their last meeting by the problem of draft dodgers from the Federal Republic. Herr Diepgen said that unfortunately it was proving difficult to solve. But he hoped it could be settled after the Federal elections.

750th Anniversary Celebrations

Herr Diepgen said that he hoped the Prime Minister would come to Berlin for the 750th Anniversary celebrations. The Prime Minister said that there had been a suggestion that those attending the Economic Summit in June might go on to Berlin. But she had not yet been able to discuss this idea with the other participants. However, The Queen would certainly visit Berlin. Herr Diepgen said that President Reagan had also agreed in principle to pay a visit although there were no dates yet. He hoped that both President Mitterrand and M. Chirac would also come. He believed that the celebrations would have an important function in strengthening Berlin for the future. But there was also a risk that, because the celebrations would be divided between East and West, they would highlight the continuing division of the city. He wanted to use the occasion as an opportunity to overcome these divisions and show the people of the GDR the attractions of freedom.

East/West Relations

The Prime Minister said that negotiations on arms control were not in themselves an adequate framework for conducting relations with the Soviet Union. We must look at other sources of tension between East and West. The Berlin Wall was one of the most obvious symbols of this tension. The Soviet Union should never be allowed to forget this. Herr Diepgen agreed. The aim should be to seek dialogue at all levels designed to show the superiority of the Western system. The Prime Minister replied that she was always hearing about "détente" and "dialogue". But they were words. You could see the Wall. Herr Diepgen said that one had to start from the reality that the Wall divided Europe into two power blocs. We could not expect to dissolve the Eastern bloc. But in the long run we could loosen it up by demonstrating the superiority of the democratic system. He believed that Berlin could become a symbol of, and a focus for, East/West dialogue. The Prime Minister said that she was anxious that the West should not always be on the giving side. We must get something from the Soviet Union as well. Above all the West must remain staunch in defence. Herr Diepgen agreed that we should not seek dialogue for its own sake but in order to reach concrete agreements. He underlined the importance of

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the 750th Anniversary celebrations as a focus for further progress in East/West relations.

I am copying this letter to John Howe (Ministry of Defence).

Yours sincerely
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