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From the Private Secretary

7 November, 1988.

MEETING WITH HERR TELTSCHIK

Herr Teltschik came over from Bonn today to report on the Chancellor's visit to Moscow and discuss a number of other issues, including South Africa on which I have written separately. He had a brief meeting with the Prime Minister, and a rather longer talk with me. This letter elides the two discussions.

Chancellor Kohl's Visit to Moscow

Herr Teltschik said that Chancellor Kohl's visit to Moscow had been well received in the Federal Republic. There was a feeling that Germany had now caught up with the other major Western powers in terms of relations with the Soviet Union. Mr. Gorbachev was a very popular figure in the Federal Republic, and this was a political reality of which the Government had to take account.

Herr Teltschik continued that the Germans had found Mr. Gorbachev in excellent shape. It had been clear from the beginning that he was determined to make a success of Chancellor Kohl's visit. There had been no spectacular surprises, but the net effect had been to normalise relations. The Germans had the clear impression that Yakovlev was now number two in the Soviet hierarchy, and part of an inner ring comprising also Shevardnadze and Ryzkhov. Ligachev seemed to be out of the limelight; at the official dinner he had been placed on the second table. Another point which had struck the Germans was that Gorbachev's ideas seemed not to have percolated down to working level in the Soviet bureaucracy. This was very evident when it came to trying to negotiate texts. There had been particular problems, still unresolved, over finding language to deal with the inclusion of West Berlin in the texts of planned bilateral agreements.

Herr Teltschik said that Gorbachev had outlined the three main areas of interest for the talks with

SECRET

Chancellor Kohl: bilateral relations, shaping Europe and improving international relations. On the bilateral front, Gorbachev had warned Kohl against trying to embarrass him over "my Germans". He had talked of restoring an autonomous area for Germans in the Soviet Union and introducing a law to provide better protection for minorities. The Germans were prepared to take him at his word on this. Shaping Europe was another term for Gorbachev's talk of a Common European Home. He had stressed that this should not mean any weakening of existing alliances or change in the post-war order in Europe. These were the basis from which any progress in European relations must start. He had also made clear that the United States and Canada were inhabitants of the Common European Home. Under the heading of improving international relations, Gorbachev had talked mostly about arms control, but the Germans had been more impressed by what he did not say than what he did. He had made no mention of a third zero option for SNF. Nor had he raised the issue of modernising Lance. On the other hand, he had criticised Franco-German military cooperation and the revival of WEU. He had emphasised that the Soviet Union was serious in seeking reductions in conventional forces.

Herr Teltschik continued that Gorbachev had also discussed economic relations, adopting a rather defiant tone and warning the Germans against treating the Soviet Union as simply an economic hinterland. He had also spoken of his problems in trying to get rid of internal barriers between the defence sector and the civil economy in the Soviet Union. In discussion of human rights issues, Gorbachev had stressed the importance of holding a human rights conference in Moscow. Chancellor Kohl had said that he was open-minded on this. The Western countries would see what emerged from the planned meetings in Paris and Copenhagen, and then decide whether sufficient progress had been made. The German view was that Gorbachev probably needed a conference to push forward human rights against internal opposition. The Prime Minister made clear to Herr Teltschik that we took a more astringent view of this subject, and were not prepared to contemplate attending a conference unless various agreed criteria for human rights performance had been met and sustained. She also enquired about reports that the Soviet Union had backed down from its commitment during Chancellor Kohl's visit to free all political prisoners. Herr Teltschik said rather defensively that this had been put in Chancellor Kohl's press conference statement at Herr Genscher's insistence, following his own talks with Shevardnadze. In practice, Shevardnadze had said nothing to Genscher that he had not earlier said to Shultz and to the French Government during his visit to Paris.

Franco-German Cooperation

Herr Teltschik was rather pessimistic in speaking about Franco-German cooperation. The Germans found President Mitterrand very difficult to pin down. His staff had no new ideas for developing Franco-German cooperation. At the moment, very little was happening.

US Elections

Herr Teltschik thought it very important that the Prime Minister and Chancellor Kohl should convey very similar messages to the incoming President during their visits to Washington, both on East-West relations, the US economy and the Middle East. From our conversation, there did not seem to be any significant distance between us on these issues. Herr Teltschik thought that Vice-President Bush, if elected, would be anxious to hold an early NATO Summit. His advice was that we should convert the NATO Spring Ministerial Meeting in London into a Summit, as a means of binding the new President into agreed Alliance positions.

Modernisation of Nuclear Weapons

Herr Teltschik said that Chancellor Kohl was still committed to take the necessary decisions for replacement of LANCE. Given the political difficulties in the Federal Republic, he would need all the help he could get from us. It would be important to combine replacement of LANCE with a reduction in NATO's nuclear artillery. It would also be helpful to rally the widest possible support in the Alliance for early decisions on modernisation, so that the Chancellor could argue the need to go along with pressure from Germany's allies. In response to my specific question, Herr Teltschik said that he was confident that the necessary decisions would be taken before the next German elections. He would like to discuss these matters in greater detail with me shortly.

I am copying this letter to Brian Hawtin (Ministry of Defence) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

C.D. Powell

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office.