



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

An interesting letter from  
 Julian Bullard but it

6 February 1985

doesn't (except perhaps in para. 10)  
 answer your question: what  
 are the implications of greater German  
 consciousness of being German, & their growing  
 tendency to throw their weight about in Europe?

Dear Charles,

Whither the Federal Republic?

When she saw Sir Antony Acland recently, the Prime Minister expressed interest in current developments in the FRG, the mood of the country, and its prospects. Sir Antony asked Sir Julian Bullard for his thoughts, which he has sent us. I enclose his letter of 2 February entitled "Whither the Federal Republic?".

At the same time as this letter, we received an account by Sir Julian of the work he and his Embassy have been doing to improve Britain's image in the FRG. The Prime Minister may be interested to read this too. I enclose a copy.

As the Prime Minister will know, the Foreign Secretary has for some time now been paying considerable attention to the improvement of our image in the FRG, as noted in paragraph 2 of Sir Julian's second letter. He intends to go on doing so.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
 10 Downing Street



Sir Julian Bullard KCMG

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
BONN.

CONFIDENTIAL

2 February 1985

Sir Antony Acland KCMG KCVO  
Permanent Under-Secretary  
FCO

*My dear Antony,*

WHITHER THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC?

1. You asked me to let you have my thoughts on which way this country is moving.
2. There are some worrying developments in the Federal Republic: the rapidly growing public support for the Greens, an obsessive and largely emotional concern about environmental issues; and a new wave of terrorism. But my main message is reassuring. The Federal Republic is a very stable democracy with a very strong economy and very loyal to the West. There is no question about the top priority given here to NATO and the Community, and to the bilateral relationship with the United States, by the CDU/CSU and the FDP and by Kohl personally. The present coalition of these parties has a good record on major things like the economy and INF. It will be in office until the next general election in early 1987. The most likely outcome of that election is continuation of the same coalition. The next most likely outcome, if the FDP fails to get back into the Bundestag, is a CDU/CSU government with an overall majority. Despite the rapid growth

CONFIDENTIAL

/in



CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

in the Greens' support - now at least 10 per cent in opinion polls - the chances of a hung parliament with the Greens holding the balance are not high. The risk of the SPD and the Greens sharing power in what is called a Red-Green Coalition is even smaller, because of the disagreements between them and the consequent dispute within each of them about the question of cooperation with the other.

3. One reason for my confidence about the 1987 election is that the overwhelming majority of Federal public opinion do not like sudden change. The Greens, if they secured a role in government, would certainly bring surprises. If the present coalition parties continue to warn the electorate against "Red/Green chaos", the vote for the SPD and the Greens will be reduced and the risk that CDU/CSU or FDP voters will stay at home will be minimised. Even the SPD's own leaders do not expect it to be back in government before 1991.

4. In this country, as elsewhere, novelty and excitement in politics get the headlines. The antics of the Greens and the more extreme ideas on the left of the SPD receive more publicity than majority opinion. This phenomenon is magnified here by the Germans' lack of self-assurance, caused by the catastrophes they have wrought within living memory. They have made some progress in learning to live with the past, and in general they are more self-confident than they used to be. But the process is not complete and public opinion is easily prone to Angst. There is agonised discussion in the media every time anyone suggests that neutralism is growing, that the Federal Republic is seen by its allies as unreliable, that Germany's beloved forests are dying, that the population has entered upon an

/unstoppable

CONFIDENTIAL



unstoppable decline, that terrorism is winning etc etc.

5. That said, the overwhelming majority of West Germans are content with their place as citizens of the Federal Republic. Most now have no memory of a larger Germany. They would like to see re-unification if it were available, and they would welcome it if offered, whatever the financial cost. But they know it to be out of the question for a long time yet, and they seldom think about it, still less work for it. Kohl speaks of the theme because he does not want to leave it to the extreme right or the extreme left, not because he wants a different policy towards the GDR from the one he inherited from Schmidt and has largely continued. There is a consensus in the FRG that the government should do what it can to ease the lot of the 17 million Germans living under Communist autocracy, who are seen as paying far more heavily than the West Germans for what Hitler did. But the paradox is that the development of inner-German relations takes place between two German states and tends to consolidate the separate existence of the GDR even while it builds up links between the peoples.

6. The Federal Republic also has a special psychology in East-West relations generally. Its position on the fault-line in Europe makes it feel not only the need to find security in Western solidarity but also the need to promote relaxation of East-West tension in fair weather or foul. Under Schmidt, this was sometimes expressed in indulgent interpretations of Soviet acts: you will remember especially his mild reaction to the declaration of martial law in Poland. But Kohl, in a crisis like Afghanistan or Poland, will think first of the need to maximise agreement with Washington, not

/of



CONFIDENTIAL

- 4 -

of the desirability of minimising the damage to East-West relations.

7. Chancellor Kohl, the genial generalist, radiates confidence and has a good track record as a vote-winner. His relaxed style reassures many Germans, and his weaknesses strike an echoing chord at the grass roots. He is also a good political strategist. His shortcomings lie in handling the detail of policy and the tactics of politics. He has allowed the affair about the Silesian expellees to grow from a banana-skin to an oil-slick. This fallibility may in time lead to his departure. If so, there are two convincing CDU Chancellors-in-waiting: Stoltenberg, the Finance Minister, and Spaeth, the Minister-President of Baden-Württemberg. The former must be the favourite.

### Conclusion

8. I believe, in sum, that the West Germans are generally contented, and distrustful of change; that neutralist tendencies in the Greens and on the left of the SPD are very far from representing a majority; that another staunchly pro-Western government is by far the most likely result of the 1987 elections; that Kohl's weaknesses may possibly bring him down; but that this would change the Chancellor without changing the coalition.

9. As Oliver Wright was fond of pointing out, this is a country of dark and deep passions. I sometimes have the feeling of a people bursting at the emotional seams, as Kohl gives the impression of bursting out of his suits. If Germans are turning back to their own past, this is partly because they find the present so

/constricting

CONFIDENTIAL



constricting. But at the moment their energy is channelled in harmless directions: making yet more money, buying a 3rd and 4th house, more and more expensive medical treatment, conspicuous consumption of all kinds, investment overseas. I see nothing to suggest that the Germans are about to throw over democracy, cut their links to the West or begin to behave in an unpredictable manner. The engine is a powerful one and a lot of steam comes out of it, not all of it from the funnel. But the locomotive is not about to leave the track.

10. Looking further ahead, I have explained elsewhere why I think that "the German question" is likely to be with us for some time to come, and of course I took careful note of the despatch which I received in reply. I do believe that the restlessness which has caused so much trouble to Europe and the world in this century is still present in the German character - or perhaps I should say that it has re-emerged. I can imagine circumstances in which this might turn in directions disagreeable to us: for example, if there were a severe economic recession in this country, or if the European Community disintegrated, or if the US broke off all contact with the Soviet Union and announced its intention of going full steam ahead with all its current defence programmes and with SDI as well. (I hope there is no reason to expect any of these things to happen.) I also believe that many Germans are conscious that their economic strength is not matched by their political and economic status in the world - a feature which they share with Japan. There are the ingredients for a revival of German discontent. But there is not at present a significant national mood on these lines. Nor is Kohl a man capable of articulating it.

/11.



CONFIDENTIAL

- 6 -

11. I leave it to you to decide whether to give this letter any further distribution, and I apologise for its length.

*Yours ever*  
*Julian*

J L Bullard

CONFIDENTIAL



BRITISH EMBASSY,  
BONN.

CONFIDENTIAL

1 February 1985

D M D Thomas Esq CMG  
FCO

*My dear Derek,*

### BRITAIN'S IMAGE IN THE FRG

1. There was correspondence between this post and the Department in 1983 about Britain's image in the Federal Republic (Christopher Mallaby's letter of 8 July and WED's of 15 August). The conclusion was that, although our image had taken a turn for the better, there was still plenty of room for improvement.

2. As you know we have been trying for some months to remind the German government and public of the importance - and importance to them - of Britain. In my 5 months here I have been enormously helped by such things as the Secretary of State's speeches in Bonn and Berlin, his article in Foreign Affairs, his short but well-timed and telling article in Handelsblatt, Exercise Lionheart and the British Council's anniversary events. At a more modest level, we have sought to exploit a weakness of the regional structure of the German media - that slender resources often make it difficult for editors to be well informed across the board - through a series of press interviews in the major cities of the FRG, designed to get the

/British

CONFIDENTIAL





British message across. Adding up my own figures after my first five months, I am slightly astonished to find that I have logged up over 40 substantive discussions with press, radio and television, counting 2 or 3 in London before I arrived. Of these, 19 (12 press, 7 radio/TV) have been on the record and have resulted in hard copy or broadcasts. The remainder have been background and largely off the record.

3. The Community has naturally been the dominant theme, but there have also been opportunities to put over our views on East-West relations, NATO and especially our contribution to Western defence in cooperation with the FRG. I have been questioned more than once about the Falklands, and about Northern Ireland. In both Hanover and Stuttgart the closure of our career consular posts has naturally been raised. And people never stop asking about Britain's policy on the pollution of the air and the North Sea. In Berlin, questions have usually been of a local character: Gatow range etc.

4. Looking back over this half year, I would say that Britain's image is still improving. Judging from his interview in the Times of 18 January, Kohl and his staff have got the message about our importance. The press reactions to the Summit on that day were very positive. The Prime Minister's image of determined leadership, stressed in Mallaby's letter in 1983, continues to be a major asset, though the pressure on sterling in recent weeks has somewhat shaken confidence. The collapse of the miners' strikes, when it finally comes, will be seen here as a great victory, although an expensive one. The importance of British Forces Germany has recently been



CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

more widely noticed. I think that our European commitment is becoming better recognised, and the end of the budget saga should help to maintain this trend.

5. So far, so good. But we must stick to it. I know I can count on continuation of the excellent response we have had from Ministers and officials in London to our proposals for efforts to improve this very important bilateral relationship. Various useful things are in the pipeline, with Königswinter a major event on the horizon for the end of March.

*Yours ever  
Julian*

J L Bullard

cc N J Barrington Esq CMG CVO, FCO  
D J Wyatt Esq CBE, BMG Berlin  
T J Everard Esq CMG, East Berlin  
Career Consuls-General in FRG  
CICC(G)

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



Rie ea

a PC

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

11 February 1985

Whither the Federal Republic?

Thank you for your letter of 6 February enclosing a copy of Sir Julian Bullard's letter: "Whither the Federal Republic?" to Sir Antony Acland. The Prime Minister has read this with interest.

She would be interested in further views on the extent to which the growing self-confidence and German consciousness of the Federal Republic will lead it to behave in a more self-interested manner within the Community and within Europe generally and the implications for us.

(Charles Powell)

Colin Budd, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

CONFIDENTIAL

CST.