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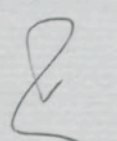
24 February 1984

*Dear John,*

FRG Ambassador's Call on the Prime Minister:  
1030 on 28 February

/ Thank you for your letter of 20 February. I enclose  
/ a short brief with a personality note and a note on the  
German internal scene. I enclose also one spare set of  
these papers.

I understand that it has been decided that neither  
the German Ambassador in London nor Sir Jock Taylor  
should be present when Chancellor Kohl calls on the Prime  
Minister.

*Yours ever,*  


(B J P Fall)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

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*Handwritten mark, possibly initials or a signature.*

CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER BY RUEDIGER BARON VON WECHMAR,  
AMBASSADOR OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AT 1030 ON  
28 FEBRUARY

1. Baron von Wechmar has asked for this call before Chancellor Kohl's talks with the Prime Minister at 1545 on 28 February, on which separate briefing is being submitted. It has been agreed (no doubt to Baron von Wechmar's regret) that Ambassadors should not attend these talks. This will be his introductory call. He has not indicated any specific subjects. He may be expected to ask how the Prime Minister approaches her talks with the Chancellor. A personality note and background political brief are attached.

2. Baron von Wechmar succeeded Dr Juergen Ruhfus on 20 December 1983. He presented his credentials to The Queen on 7 February and has paid his introductory calls on the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, FCO Ministers and senior officials.

3. The most important bilateral event before the Anglo-German Summit at Chequers on 2 May is the annual Koenigswinter Conference to be held at St Catharine's College Cambridge from 5-8 April. Baron von Wechmar will attend the Koenigswinter dinner hosted by Sir Geoffrey Howe on 6 April, and is to give his own reception on 7 April. The most important German participant will be Dr Richard von Weizsaecker, ex-Governing Mayor of Berlin and CDU/CSU candidate for the Federal Presidency. The Prime Minister has offered him dinner on 5 April, and he will have talks and lunch with Sir Geoffrey Howe before going to Cambridge. The Prime Minister attended the 30th anniversary Koenigswinter Conference at Cambridge in 1980.

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*i.e. the usual  
Cite à Cite +  
notations.  
for 27.  
2*



RUEDIGER, FREIHERR VON WECHMAR

Born 15 November 1923 in Berlin. After secondary school, military service, reaching the rank of Lieutenant in the 'Afrikakorps'. Taken prisoner by the Americans in 1943. 1943-46 studied law and journalism (as a POW) at the University of Minnesota. Graduated MA in 1946. 1946-47 an editor and correspondent of United Press Association based at Frankfurt am Main. 1958-62 Press Counsellor at the Consulate General in New York of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). 1963-68 foreign correspondent for Second German Television (ZDF). 1968-70 Head of FRG Information Centre in New York (a dependency of the Washington Embassy). 1970-72 deputy Head of the Press and Information Office of the Federal Government in Bonn. 1972 promoted to the rank of State Secretary and appointed Chief Government Spokesman. 1974-81 Ambassador and FRG Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York. President of the 35th UN General Assembly. 1981-83 FRG Ambassador in Rome.

Protestant, Baron von Wechmar's second marriage was to Dina Susanne (Susi) Woldenga in 1961. They have three children (two from his first marriage). A member of the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP), the junior partner (Chairman Herr Hans-Dietrich Genscher who is also Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister) in the governing coalition in Bonn.

Speaks excellent English.

## THE FEDERAL GERMAN POLITICAL SCENE


## BACKGROUND

1. Chancellor Kohl's CDU/CSU/FDP coalition came to power in October 1982 after Schmidt's SPD/FDP coalition broke up, primarily over economic policy. Kohl then led the CDU/CSU to their second best ever election result on 6 March 1983. But he needed the liberal FDP as a coalition partner (the Greens deprived the CDU/CSU of an absolute majority) and he was able to follow his personal preference in re-appointing Genscher (FDP) as Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister, leaving Strauss (CSU) as Minister President in Bavaria. The SPD result was their worst for twenty years.

2. The Hesse and Bremen Land (regional) elections on 25 September 1983 constituted the first electoral test of the coalition's popularity. The results were a boost for the SPD at the expense of the CDU. The FDP cleared the 5% hurdle needed for parliamentary representation in the more important election in Hesse, but failed in Bremen.

3. During the latter part of 1983 the dominant issue was INF deployment. But the focus has now shifted to prospects for the coalition in the light of corruption charges against one of its main architects, Count Lambsdorff (the FDP Economics Minister) and Kohl's decision not to dismiss his (CDU) Defence Minister, Woerner. Lambsdorff is clinging to office but may resign if, as seems increasingly likely, his case comes to trial in June.

4. The essence of the case against Woerner is that he retired and humiliated a four star General (Kiessling) because his alleged homosexuality made him a security risk on the basis of flimsy evidence. Kiessling has been rehabilitated, but Woerner will have the greatest difficulty in regaining the confidence of the armed forces.



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5. Kohl has kept Woerner and, for the time being, Lambsdorff because replacing them would have involved restructuring his delicately balanced coalition under pressure from Strauss. Kohl has kept Strauss in baulk, but at the price of stimulating speculation about his own future. The Finance Minister, Stoltenberg, who gets on well with Strauss, is the obvious successor.

6. Kohl's recent performance in foreign affairs has also been patchy. Most observers consider he mishandled his visit to Israel and doubts have surfaced about his relations with Mitterrand.

7. Kohl's own view is that the public are less interested in the Kiessling affair than in the improving economy. The election in Land Baden Wuerttemberg (Woerner's home state) on 25 March will be the voters' first opportunity (and only one in 1984) to pass judgement.

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