

State papers

Thatcher had deep misgivings over reunification of Germany

MARGARET Thatcher's deep misgivings over the reunification of Germany are laid bare in newly released government papers.

Files released by the National Archives in Kew, west London, show she had to be cajoled by aides into issuing a congratulatory statement following the ending of Germany's partition into two states.

Meanwhile, British officials worked quietly behind the scenes to scupper a planned ceremony celebrating the event to be attended by world leaders.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 marked the end of the Cold War and paved the way for communist East Germany to be reunited with West Germany, ending the division that had been in place since the end of the Second World War.

But while the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe represented a triumph for the west, Mrs Thatcher feared a resurgent Germany would dominate the continent.

The files show her concerns ran

■ **REACTION:**
German chancellor
Helmut Kohl with
British prime
minister Margaret
Thatcher



so deep she even had to be coaxed into making a positive statement when she appeared for a photocall with the West German ambassador on eve of formal reunification in Oc-

tober 1990.

"The key is to get in the words 'friend, ally and partner' (if you can bear it)," Charles Powell, her long-standing foreign adviser, pleaded in

a handwritten note.

"Otherwise a message risks being judged negatively, which undermines the only purpose of the exercise."

Tory coup shock

THE fall of Margaret Thatcher after 11 years in power was greeted with shock and disbelief by fellow world leaders. Newly released government files show how in November 1990 presidents and prime ministers around the world could scarcely credit the way she had been forced out by an internal Conservative Party coup. The papers include a remarkable outpouring of tributes and commiserations from those she had clashed with as well as her close allies. They also disclose the raw anger among her inner circle at the way she had been treated by those she had led so successfully for so long.

Tributes came from US secretary of state Henry Kissinger, French president Francois Mitterrand and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.



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