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After 1968, it was customary for British Science Correspondents to **Visit German scientific establishments** in various parts of Germany – always a very pleasant occasion. This was due to the efficient planning by the Science Counsellors of the German Embassy in London and by Internationes in Germany, which always prepared the detailed infrastructure of these events. This photograph was taken at a historical place with the **Berlin Wall** still in front of the Brandenburg Gate on 27 May 1963.

From left to right: Unrecorded member of Internationes. David Wilson, Science BBC; Mary Goldring, *The Economist*; Anthony Smith, Science Correspondent *Daily Telegraph*; the Author; John Davy, Science Correspondent, *The Observer*. (Courtesy Internationes)

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From October 1968 onwards it became a pleasant routine from time to time to visit West-German scientific institutions at the invitation of the West German Federal Republic. Their press department had previously organised many visits for political press journalists from Britain and other European countries, but science writers were a new breed. Carefully planned in close consultation with the science counselor at the German Embassy in London, they proved not only very instructive, but also comfortable, not to say luxurious, when compared with such visits to some other countries. At least that was my impression, as I re-discovered Germany as a normal civilised country 23 years after the end of World War II.

Our first stop on the 1968 tour was at IABG, the Industrie Anlagen Betriebs Gesellschaft, the cover name of a Central Testing Facility for the German Defence Industry in Ottobrunn, near Munich. It was owned 75 % by Government and 25 % by industry and, not surprisingly, most work concerned air and space developments.

As a matter of fact this German visit was mostly devoted to these air and space subjects, particularly so our stay in Stuttgart at the main German research institute for air and space. The range of research projects was most impressive, from electron space propulsion and exotic fuels, like fluorine for rockets, to geodetic fibre structures, produced from unusual chemical elements like boron and beryllium.

The climax of the visit was a lengthy briefing for us by Dr Gerhard Stoltenberg, the German Federal Minister for scientific research at his Bonn Ministry. I met him on numerous occasions in Germany and Britain and listened to many of his official and unofficial statements. I was amazed by his ability to master scientific subjects, speaking equally clearly and convincingly about cancer virus or interdisciplinary research, in German or in English. Such a superb Minister for science with Cabinet rank was sorely missed in Britain at the time.

I wrote a long report about his Bonn talk, which was at the same time a summary of our German visit. It was published in the *Sunday Telegraph* under the headline "Germany steps up Space Research".