

GRS 380

(COLLAR)
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Amended Dist.

FM BONN

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 136

OF 181740Z FEBRUARY 86

INFO PRIORITY EC POSTS, WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, EAST BERLIN, BMG BERLIN
INFO SAVING CG FRANKFURT, CG DUSSELDORF, CG MUNICH, CG HAMBURG
INFO SAVING CG BERLIN, CICC(G)

MY TELNO 128: INVESTIGATION AGAINST KOHL

1. BONN IS A BIT DAZED BY THIS NEWS. THE FLICK AFFAIR HAS BEEN OFF THE FRONT PAGES FOR MANY WEEKS AND THE PARLIAMENTARY INVESTIGATION IS IN COURSE OF BEING WOUND UP. NOW THE AFFAIR HAS SUDDENLY BOUNCED BACK IN A WAY THAT DAMAGES THE GOVERNMENT COALITION AND PUTS KOHL PERSONALLY IN A TIGHT CORNER.

2. OPINIONS IN BONN ARE VERY DIVIDED. COALITION POLITICIANS SAY LOYALLY THAT KOHL CAN SIT THIS DIFFICULTY OUT AS HE HAS SO MANY OTHERS, AND THAT THE WHOLE THING IS A MANOEUVRE BY SCHILY TO GET HIS PARLIAMENTARY MANDATE EXTENDED (UNDER GREEN PARTY RULES HE IS DUE TO BE ROTATED OUT AS SOON AS THE FLICK COMMITTEE IS WOUND UP). THE SPD ARE PLEASED WITH THIS UNEXPECTED BOOST TO THEIR ELECTION PROSPECTS, BUT NONE TOO HAPPY WITH THE THOUGHT THAT THE LIKELY GAINERS ARE THE GREENS. SCHILY HIMSELF, A SKILLED BUT UNSCRUPULOUS LAWYER (HE HAS ACTED FOR RED ARMY FACTION TERRORISTS), TOLD ME WITH SOME SATISFACTION THAT HE THOUGHT KOHL FACED A DILEMMA: SHOULD HE RESIGN AT ONCE, OR STICK IT OUT AND RISK THE CASE COMING TO A HEAD JUST AS THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN ENTERS ITS FINAL STAGES IN THE AUTUMN?

3. I FIND IT HARD TO PREDICT HOW MATTERS WILL DEVELOP. THE CDU WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER THEY WANT TO BRING MATTERS TO A HEAD QUICKLY, OR TO TRY TO SPIN THE INVESTIGATION OUT UNTIL AFTER THE FEDERAL ELECTIONS NEXT JANUARY: I WOULD EXPECT THE FORMER. THE FACT THAT THE KOBLENZ PUBLIC PROSECUTOR IS SUBJECT TO THE CDU RHINELAND-PALATINATE MINISTER OF JUSTICE GIVES THEM A MEANS OF INFLUENCING HIM. THE BONN PUBLIC PROSECUTOR ON THE OTHER HAND COMES UNDER THE SPD JUSTICE MINISTER IN NORTH-RHINE WESTFALIA. IF THE KOBLENZ INVESTIGATION PETERS OUT AND THE BONN ACCUSATION EITHER DOES LIKEWISE OR IS NOT PROCEEDED WITH, KOHL CAN CARRY ON AS HITHERTO, HIS PRESTIGE WEAKENED BUT NOT SERIOUSLY. BUT IT IS NOT TO BE EXCLUDED THAT ONE OR OTHER INVESTIGATION MIGHT LEAD TO A PROSECUTION, WITH ALL THAT THAT COULD IMPLY.

4. CERTAINLY KOHL SEEMS WORRIED. THE AFFAIR WAS PROBABLY ALREADY PREYING ON HIS MIND WHEN I SAW HIM ON 4 FEBRUARY (MY TELNO 91) AND HE SEEMED DISTINCTLY RATTLED WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT THE ALLEGATIONS ON TV ON 13 FEBRUARY.

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