

PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. T138A/86

OPS

Translation

Federal Republic of Germany  
The Federal Chancellor

Bonn, 21 July 1986

ce Morte

Subject: Rudolf Hess:  
GERMANY July '80

The Right Honourable  
Margaret Thatcher, MP  
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain  
and Northern Ireland  
London

Dear Prime Minister, dear Margaret,

A few days ago, 92-year-old Rudolf Hess was transferred to the British military hospital in Berlin-Spandau. This is an occasion for me to make an urgent appeal to you to grant him a pardon so that he may be allowed to join his family.

Rudolf Hess is an old and sick man and as far as one can judge does not have much longer to live. For this reason, and in consideration of the time he has spent in prison, which now can serve no meaningful punitive purpose, he should, on humanitarian grounds, no longer be denied clemency.

Clemency for a very old man after four and a half decades in prison would not imply that the atrocities of National Socialism, part of the political responsibility for which is borne by Rudolf Hess, will be forgotten. Nor would a pardon on humanitarian grounds be synonymous with forgiving.

In 1946, as you know, the International Military Tribunal acquitted Rudolf Hess of the charge of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Germany bears historic responsibility for the crimes of Nazi tyranny. The release of Rudolf Hess would not alter this fact.

In my view clemency for Rudolf Hess is a dictate of humanity. To continue the now over 40-year imprisonment of a 92-year-old sick man would be utterly inhumane.

I therefore most sincerely appeal to you, Prime Minister, to support my request and secure the early release of Rudolf Hess.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd.) Helmut Kohl