

File

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MDADAN 7577

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FM BONN
TO FLASH FCO
TELNO 846
OF 291101Z AUGUST 88
INFO FLASH MODUK
INFO IMMEDIATE CG MUNICH
INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, UKDEL NATO

SIC

FCO PLEASE PASS TO DUTY OFFICERS BUCKINGHAM PALACE AND NUMBER 10
DOWNING STREET

TELECON FIGGIS/RESIDENT CLERK : RAMSTEIN AIR DISASTER

1. WE UNDERSTAND FROM U S EMBASSY THAT FORTY PEOPLE HAVE NOW DIED AS A RESULT OF YESTERDAY'S ACCIDENT DURING AN AIR DISPLAY AT THE U S BASE AT RAMSTEIN. THEY INCLUDE THE PILOTS OF THE THREE ITALIAN PLANES WHICH CRASHED, AND A NUMBER OF U S CITIZENS. 26 OF THE DEAD REMAIN TO BE IDENTIFIED. THE U S MILITARY AUTHORITIES BELIEVE THAT MOST OF THESE WERE FRG CITIZENS.
2. SOME 500 PEOPLE WERE INJURED, OF WHOM OVER 300 REMAIN IN HOSPITAL. CICC(G) ARE IN TOUCH WITH THE US MILITARY AUTHORITIES TO OFFER ASSISTANCE IN TREATING THE INJURED.
3. THERE IS NO INDICATION, AT THIS STAGE, OF ANY BRITISH CASUALTIES. BUT THIS CANNOT YET BE SAID WITH CERTAINTY. AS YOU KNOW (RESIDENT CLERK'S TELECON WITH SALMON, MUNICH), THE INJURED HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO A DOZEN DIFFERENT HOSPITALS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT CONSULATE-GENERAL MUNICH, WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR EMERGENCY CONSULAR ACTION SOUTHERN GERMANY OVER THE BANK HOLIDAY, HAVE GIVEN YOU TWO EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THOSE OF THE DEAD AND INJURED SO FAR IDENTIFIED. MUNICH WILL OF COURSE REPORT FURTHER ABOUT POSSIBLE BRITISH CASUALTIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
4. MEANWHILE, MIFT (NOT TO ALL) CONTAINS TEXTS OF MESSAGES OF CONDOLENCE WHICH I RECOMMEND SHOULD BE SENT FROM HM THE QUEEN TO PRESIDENT VON WIEZSAECKER: FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO KOHL: AND FROM YOU TO GENSCHER. FOR A DISASTER ON THIS SCALE, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR ALL THREE MESSAGES TO BE SENT. IN RELATION TO A MESSAGE FROM THE QUEEN, IT IS RELEVANT THAT PRESIDENT VON

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WEIZSAECKER SENT MESSAGES TO HER AFTER BOTH THE ZEEBRUGGE AND PIPER ALPHA DISASTERS. YOU WILL ALSO WISH TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT, ACCORDING TO FIRST INDICATIONS FROM THE U S EMBASSY HERE, PRESIDENT REAGAN IS LIKELY TO SEND A MESSAGE. DUMAS HAS SENT A MESSAGE TO GENSCHER. THE FRENCH EMBASSY SAY THAT A MESSAGE FROM MITTERAND MAY FOLLOW.

5. YOU WILL WISH TO CONSIDER A POSSIBLE MESSAGE FROM THE DEFENCE SECRETARY. ON BALANCE, I RECOMMEND AGAINST THIS. SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DISPLAY AT RAMSTEIN WERE THE DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY OF THE U S MILITARY AUTHORITIES. BUT DEFENCE MINISTER SCHOLZ IS ALREADY UNDER ATTACK, IN THIS MORNING'S GERMAN PRESS, FOR AUTHORISING THE DISPLAY, AND FOR 'IGNORING SAFETY WARNINGS'. MY PRESENT JUDGEMENT IS THAT IT WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL TO HIM IN DEFENDING HIS POSITION, AND IN FENDING OFF ATTEMPTS TO LINK THE DISASTER WITH THE ISSUE OF MILITARY LOW-FLYING IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC (OF WHICH THERE ARE ALREADY SIGNS), IF MR YOUNGER TOO WERE TO SEND A MESSAGE.

6. I UNDERSTAND THAT MESSAGES FROM BRITISH MILITARY AUTHORITIES TO THEIR OPPOSITE NUMBERS ARE ALSO UNDER CONSIDERATION. I SEE NO OBJECTION TO THIS, THOUGH WE HAVE AGREED WITH RAF(GERMANY) THAT THE RIGHT DESTINATION IS EITHER C-IN-C USAF(E) OR THE U S BASE COMMANDER AT RAMSTEIN.

7. I SHALL REPORT FURTHER ABOUT THE BROADER POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE TRAGEDY, INCLUDING IN RELATION TO LOW-FLYING.

NEVILLE-JONES

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RESIDENT CLERK

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