

GRS 394

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FM BMG BERLIN

TO DESKBY 210800Z BONNN

TELNO 172

OF 201700Z AUGUST 87

AND TO DESKBY 210800Z FCOLN

OINFO IMMEDIATE CICC GERMANY, MODUK, PARIS, MOSCOW, WASHINGTON

SIC MODUK FOR DEFENCE COMMITMENTS

FCO PLEASE ADVANCE TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET

MY TELNO 165 : HESS : THE NOTE

1. THE AMERICANS HAVE EXPRESSED TO US A STRONGLY HELD VIEW THAT A PROPER HAND WRITING ANALYSIS OF HESS'S LAST NOTE SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT. NEITHER THEY NOR WE HAVE ANY REASON TO SUSPECT THAT THE NOTE IS NOT THE WORK OF HESS HIMSELF. THE WRITING BEARS A VERY STRONG RESEMBLANCE TO LETTERS OF HIS WHICH WE HAVE SEEN IN THE PAST. NEVERTHELESS WE AGREE WITH THE AMERICANS THAT A PROFESSIONAL ANALYSIS WOULD ENABLE US IF NECESSARY TO CONFRONT ANY PUBLIC SUSPICION OF FORGERY WITH FIRM EVIDENCE. THE FRENCH CONCUR.

2. THE AMERICANS HAVE FURTHER TOLD US THAT THEY BELIEVE IT WOULD BE BEST IF SUCH AN ANALYSIS COULD BE CARRIED OUT BY BRITISH AUTHORITIES. THIS WOULD NOT ONLY BE CONSISTENT WITH BRITISH CONTROL OF THE INVESTIGATION SO FAR, BUT WOULD AVOID ANY POSSIBLE ACCUSATIONS OF THE US COVERING THEIR OWN TRACKS. IT WAS OF COURSE A US WARDER UNDER WHOSE SUPERVISION HESS DIED.

3. WE HAVE CONSULTED THE SIB WHO HAVE ADVISED US THAT THE BEST PERSON IN THE UK TO CARRY OUT SUCH AN ANALYSIS WOULD BE MR PAUL BEARD, OIC QUESTION DOCUMENTS, LABORATORY OF THE GOVERNMENT CHEMIST. (TEL 01 211 6707). WE UNDERSTAND THAT HE HAS BEEN CONSULTED PROVISIONALLY BY THE SIB AND WOULD BE PREPARED TO TAKE ON THIS JOB.

4. WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN OSVIET CONCURRENCE. THE NOTE IS AT PRESENT HELD IN A VAULT AT THE PRISON, AND TO PROCEED WITHOUT SOVIET AGREEMENT WOULD BE VERY CONTROVERSIAL, AND A NEW STAGE IN ACTING INDEPENDENTLY OF THE RUSSIANS. THIS VIEW IS SHARED BY OUR FRENCH AND US COLLEAGUES. ACCORDINGLY, THE PROPOSAL WAS PUT TO THE RUSSIANS AT A GOVERNORS' MEETING THIS AFTERNOON, AND THEY AGREED TO CONSIDER IT.

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5. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THERE IS ANY CHANCE THAT THE RUSSIANS WILL AGREE TO SENDING THE NOTE TO LONDON. IT WOULD THEREFORE BE NECESSARY FOR MR BEARD TO COME TO BERLIN. WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL IF AUTHORITY IN PRINCIPLE WOULD BE GIVEN FOR THIS,. COSTS WOULD OF COURSE BE BORNE ON THE OCB. THE AMERICANS ARE EAGER FOR AN ANALYSIS TO TAKE PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND HOPE THAT IF SOVIET AGREEMENT CAN BE OBTAINED IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR MR BEARD TO COME TO BERLIN AT THE WEEKEND.

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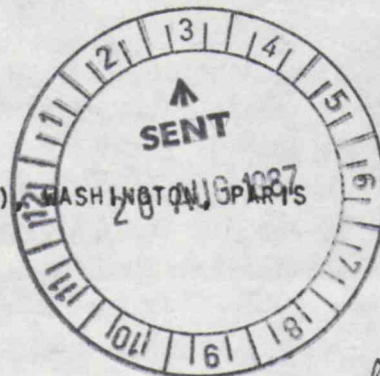
TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 637

OF 201140Z AUGUST 87

INFO IMMEDIATE BMG BERLIN, MODUK, CICC(G), WASHINGTON, G 1237

INFO IMMEDIATE MOSCOW



SIC MODUK FOR DEFENCE COMMITMENTS
BMG TELNO 167: HESS

SUMMARY

1. DOUBTS OF WOLF-RUEDIGER **HESS** AND HIS LAWYER ABOUT THE SUICIDE WIDELY REPORTED. A MINORITY WILL INSIST ON BELIEVING THERE WAS SOMETHING IRREGULAR WHATEVER WE SAY. BUT ADVANTAGE IN EARLY STATEMENT ABOUT THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE SIB INVESTIGATION. SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR UNATTRIBUTABLE BRIEFING.

DETAIL

2. ON TELEVISION LAST NIGHT WOLF-RUEDIGER SAID THAT THE SUICIDE NOTE FOUND IN HIS FATHER'S POCKET WAS NOT ENOUGH TO DISPEL HIS DOUBTS ABOUT THE SUICIDE. HE ALSO SAID THAT ONE MUST ASSUME THAT MEDICATION HAD PUT HIS FATHER INTO A CONDITION IN WHICH HE NO LONGER KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING (WHICH, ON THE FACE OF IT, IMPLIES THAT IT WAS SUICIDE, ALBEIT WHILE THE BALANCE OF THE PRISONER'S MIND WAS DISTURBED). HIS REMARKS ARE WIDELY REPRODUCED IN THE FRG PRESS TODAY. THE LAWYER, SEIDL, HAS BEEN GOING MUCH FURTHER. AMONGST OTHER CLAIMS, HE HAS SUGGESTED THAT THE SUICIDE THEORY WAS DEVELOPED IN DISCUSSION AMONG THE ALLIES, THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR AN ELDERLY INVALID TO COMMIT SUICIDE WITH AN ELECTRIC CABLE "WITH TWO FREE ENDS", AND THAT SOMEONE MUST (IN BILD'S WORDS) HAVE HELPED HIM TO DIE. ONE PAPER SAYS THAT THE ALLIES HAVE REFUSED TO COMMENT ON SEIDL'S ALLEGATIONS. MOST PAPERS CARRY SEIDL'S CLAIMS AT SOME LENGTH AND INDULGE IN SOME SNIPING AT BRITISH/ALLIED INFORMATION POLICY.

3. I BELIEVE THAT MOST GERMANS WILL DISMISS SEIDL'S CLAIMS AS ABSURD. WHAT COULD THE ALLIES POSSIBLY HAVE FOR MURDERING HESS AFTER GOING TO SUCH LENGTHS TO KEEP HIM ALIVE FOR MORE THAN 40 YEARS? A MINORITY WILL NEVERTHELESS INSIST THAT THE ALLIES ARE AT FAULT WHATEVER WE SAY.

4. AS THE SIB INVESTIGATION HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED THE ALLIES ARE IN ANY CASE LIKELY TO BE PRESSED TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT ITS CONCLUSIONS. BUT PUBLIC ATTENTION IS LIKELY TO MOVE ON TO OTHER SUBJECTS QUITE QUICKLY AFTER THE FUNERAL HAS BEEN COVERED AND I WOULD BE DOUBTFUL ABOUT ANY PROCEDURE WHICH WOULD ENTAIL REVIVING THE SUBJECT AT A LATER DATE. FOR THIS REASON, AMONGST OTHERS, I

4. AS THE SIB INVESTIGATION HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED THE ALLIES ARE IN ANY CASE LIKELY TO BE PRESSED TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT ITS CONCLUSIONS. BUT PUBLIC ATTENTION IS LIKELY TO MOVE ON TO OTHER SUBJECTS QUITE QUICKLY AFTER THE FUNERAL HAS BEEN COVERED AND I WOULD BE DOUBTFUL ABOUT ANY PROCEDURE WHICH WOULD ENTAIL REVIVING THE SUBJECT AT A LATER DATE. FOR THIS REASON, AMONGST OTHERS, I SHARE GENERAL BROOKING'S DOUBTS ABOUT INSTIGATING AT THIS STAGE PARALLEL REPORTS BY THE AMERICANS AND FRENCH.

5. THE CHOICE SEEMS TO BE BETWEEN ISSUING THE SIB REPORT IN FULL, IF IT PROVES SUITABLE (THOUGH THE INCLUSION OF THE AUTOPSY REPORT (BMG TELNO 168) ALREADY MAKES THIS DOUBTFUL) OR PUTTING OUT THE CONCLUSIONS ON THEIR OWN. EITHER WAY I HOPE WE COULD ACT TOMORROW, 21 AUGUST, AND THAT A WAY COULD BE FOUND TO ASSOCIATE AT LEAST THE AMERICANS AND THE FRENCH WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

7. MEANWHILE, I WOULD SEE ADVANTAGE IN SOME UNATTRIBUTABLE BRIEFING BY THE ALLIES. THIS MIGHT MAKE THE POINTS IN PARA 4 ABOVE. IT COULD ALSO POINT OUT THAT THE ALLIES' REACTIONS TO AN UNEXPECTED SITUATION COULD HARDLY BE INSTANTANEOUS WHEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF ALL FOUR POWERS HAD TO BE CONSULTED AT EACH STEP, THAT DECENCY REQUIRED THAT CERTAIN COMMUNICATIONS MUST BE MADE TO THE FAMILY BEFORE THEY COULD BE MADE TO THE PRESS AND THAT IT IS NOT FOR THE ALLIES TO PUBLISH THE TEXT OF THE SUICIDE NOTE ADDRESSED BY HESS TO HIS FAMILY.

7. HAVING NOW READ THE AUTOPSY REPORT, I AGREE WITH GENERAL BROOKING'S VIEW THAT WE SHOULD AVOID GIVING IT TO WOLF-RUEDIGER HESS OR PUBLISHING IT. TO A SCEPTICAL LAYMAN IT COULD EVEN APPEAR TO GIVE CREDENCE TO THE LAST OF SEIDL'S CLAIMS IN PARA 2 ABOVE.

WILLIAMS

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BONN WILL PASS TO BMG BERLIN AND CICC(G)

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