

IN 34584

TDCS DB-315/04233-68

PAGE 2 OF 4 PAGES

SECRET
(classification)

NO FOREIGN DISSEM/CONTROLLED DISSEM
(dissem controls)

MINISTER HERBERT WEHNER AND JUSTICE MINISTER GUSTAV HEINEMANN BELIEVE THE EAST GERMAN THREAT WHICH WAS PASSED TO THE JUSTICE MINISTRY THAT THE EAST GERMANS WILL STOP ALL PRISONER EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES INCLUDING THE REUNIFICATION OF FAMILIES AFTER 15 NOVEMBER IF FELFE IS NOT RELEASED. THIS THREAT IS CONTAINED IN A LETTER WHICH WAS SENT BY THE EAST GERMAN LAWYER VOGEL DURING THE LAST WEEK OF OCTOBER TO THE JUSTICE MINISTRY THROUGH THE OFFICE OF THE ALL-GERMAN AFFAIRS MINISTRY IN BERLIN. ONE SHIPMENT OF PRISONERS WAS DELIVERED TO WEST GERMANY ON 13 NOVEMBER, AND ANOTHER SHIPMENT, ANNOUNCED AS "THE LAST SHIPMENT", WAS SCHEDULED FOR 14 NOVEMBER. (SOURCE COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT TWO SHIPMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE IN ONE WEEK.)

2. MINISTERS HEINEMANN AND WEHNER BELIEVE THAT THE EAST WILL FOLLOW THROUGH WITH ITS THREAT BECAUSE THE GERMAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (BND) HAS FORWARDED A REPORT TO THE EFFECT THAT THE SOVIETS ARE BACKING UP THE EAST GERMAN THREAT AND THAT THE EAST GERMANS ARE NOW MAKING PREPARATIONS TO STOP ALL EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES. (FIELD COMMENT: WEHNER HAS ALSO MENTIONED SEVERAL SOVIET APPROACHES TO HIM ON BEHALF OF FELFE IN RECENT

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PAGE 3 OF 4 PAGES

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MONTHS. SEE STATE DEPARTMENT TELEGRAM BONN-18649, 29 OCTOBER.)

3. NEITHER THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SPD) NOR THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION (CDU) WANT TO TAKE THE BLAME FOR DISRUPTING THE PRISONER EXCHANGE AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE FAMILY REUNIFICATION PROGRAM AT CHRISTMAS TIME. THE FACT THAT THE PRISONER EXCHANGE PROGRAM WAS ORIGINALLY STARTED UNDER CDU ALL-GERMAN AFFIARS MINISTER RAINER BARZEL ALSO PLAYS A ROLE IN BOTH THE SPD AND CDU DELIBERATIONS ON THE FELFE ISSUE. THE CDU TAKES SOME PRIDE IN THE FACT THAT THE PROGRAM WAS STARTED UNDER THEIR AEGIS: THE SPD, WHERE WEHNER IN ANY CASE WISHES TO MAINTAIN THE PROGRAM AS A PART OF HIS POLICY OF CONTACT, WANTS TO AVOID CDU RECRIMINATIONS IF THE EXCHANGE BREAKS DOWN UNDER SPD MANAGEMENT. IN LIGHT OF THIS, IT APPEARS DOUBTFUL THAT THE BND WILL BE SUCCESSFUL MUCH LONGER IN PRESSING ITS [REDACTED] FELFE REMAIN IN JAIL. ON THE OTHER HAND, A FINAL DECISION AT THE CHANCELLOR'S MEETING ON 15 NOVEMBER IS UNLIKELY, SINCE THE WEST GERMAN LEADERS CONTINUE TO EXPECT ADVERSE ACTION BY THE EAST GERMANS FOLLOWING THE EAST GERMAN VOLKSKAMMER MEETING ON THE SAME DAY.

4. (FIELD COMMENT): FOR A RECENT ACCOUNT OF THE STATUS

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PAGE 4 OF 4 PAGES

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OF PRISONER EXCHANGE AND FAMILY REUNIFICATION ACTIVITIES, SEE TDCSDB-315/03669-68. ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE OF THAT REPORT, VOGEL TOLD THE WEST BERLIN LAWYER STANGE ON 4 NOVEMBER THAT NO FURTHER FAMILY REUNIFICATIONS ARE TO BE NEGOTIATED AT PRESENT, BUT THAT THE 800 ARRANGEMENTS ALREADY PAID FOR WILL BE COMPLETED. VOGEL AT THE SAME TIME ANNOUNCED THE PRISONER DELIVERIES FOR 13 AND 14 NOVEMBER. HE EXPLAINED THAT A DELIVERY PLANNED FOR 30 OCTOBER HAD TO BE POSTPONED BECAUSE OF SOVIET TROOP MOVEMENTS IN EAST GERMANY. THE DELIVERIES OF 13 AND 14 NOVEMBER WOULD BE THE LAST FOR 1968.)

5. FIELD DISTRIBUTION: EMBASSY BONN, USBER, USAFE, USAREUR, USCINCEUR.

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