

9 August 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
VIA: Deputy Director for Plans
SUBJECT: Gerhard Wessel

1. This memorandum is for your information.

2. A fortnight ago the Spiegel broke the story that Wessel would probably replace Gehlen as Chief of the BND. More recently both Wessel and Herre have indicated that the assignment of Wessel may be closer to a decision than reflected in the Spiegel story. On 7 August 1967, I met with Herre to give him a routine briefing on the Middle East situation; because he brought Wessel with him, I changed the briefing into a broader introduction to the intelligence problems of the area and the importance of the Middle East and the growing Soviet threat to European interests in the Middle East. At the end of the briefing Wessel discussed his own future. Chancellor Kiesinger has sent word that he desires to meet with Wessel during his visit here next week. Wessel appears reasonably certain that the Chancellor wants to talk about the BND assignment. Before the Chancellor arrives Wessel would like to formulate his own thoughts on the role of the head of the BND, the relationship with the Chancellor and other elements of the Bonn Government. He posed questions about the following:

Position of the President of the BND

To whom is the DCI responsible? Who appoints him? Is it a Presidential appointment? Is it subject to legislative confirmation? By the Senate or a smaller group?

Funding

How is CIA funded? Is the budget public? How is the budget presented to Congress? Does any outside agency review the allocation and expenditure of funds? Are operational expenditures concealed? How are funds transferred?

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Hiring and Firing

Does the DCI have a clear authority to take on new employees and to separate those that he believes are no longer useful? Does the DCI have authority in the personnel field that is provided by law? Are his actions in personnel matters subject to an outside review? By whom?

The Function of the DCI as an Intelligence Advisor to the President

How does CIA report intelligence to the President, the principal Cabinet officers, Departments and Agencies? Does the DCI submit identifiable CIA items directly to the President? How is this handled procedurally? Does the DCI have representation in the White House?

Relationships with the Political Parties

Does the DCI make an effort to maintain contact with the leadership of the opposition party as well as the party in power? How is this done? Is intelligence made available to the opposition party?

3. It must be remembered that Wessel has not been active within the BND Headquarters for fifteen years and has been separated from the Federal Republic Defense Ministry intelligence activities for more than five. On the other hand, his experience in Paris in the early 'fifties, his experience in Bonn, command duty and the exposure to the larger world of the NATO Standing Group in Washington have given him a perspective that will probably serve him better than prolonged duty within the BND Headquarters in Munich. Wessel has not made an effort to stay abreast of BND bureaucratic arrangements with the Federal Republic. Therefore, we cannot assume that he has thus far been a beneficiary of the exposure in some depth that CIA has been giving to senior officials who have remained in the BND or to that given Dr. Hertl, the President of the Bundesrechnungshof (the closest thing to a Bureau of the Budget that the Federal Republic has) at the time that the official relationship of the BND with Bonn was worked out.

4. I suggested to Wessel that a few minutes of conversation with you would provide the most useful answers to the questions he raised. I proposed that he consider holding such a conversation with you. (Dinner at Wessel's on 11 August 1967 might provide an occasion.)

5. I touched briefly on the basic legislation (copies of which the END has in both English and German), the special committees in Congress which provide the legislative relationship, the absence of any structured arrangement with the "out party" that was in any way comparable to Gehlen's liaison with the SPD dating back to September 1950, the practice of the President offering intelligence briefings to the opposition nominee during Presidential election campaigns, the general pattern of the DCI's position in providing intelligence directly to the President and White House staff, the evolutionary character of all but the legislated basis of the DCI position etc.

6. Beyond this, it was agreed that if and when a firm decision was reached on his appointment as Gehlen's successor, the Clandestine Services would set up a series of briefings in some depth on matters of interest to him.

7. [redacted], Deputy Chief of the European Division, was present at the briefing and this conversation; I am preparing this memorandum at his suggestion since the exchange was primarily between Wessel and me; [redacted] made the appropriate offer to Wessel regarding future briefings and assistance.

8. Earlier Herre had suggested that Chancellor Kiesinger might take soundings in Washington on Wessel's standing in the USG. As I recall, Secretary McNamara spotted Wessel as an unusually bright troop commander during a visit to Germany four or five years ago; I assume this reputation has endured through Wessel's tour in Washington. I am not aware that Wessel is well known at levels of the State Department and the White House which may be in contact with Chancellor Kiesinger. It seems unlikely that Kiesinger would, at this early date, broach this subject with any American official.

JAMES H. CRITCHFIELD
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cc: DDCI
DD/P
Chief, EUR