

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

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15. SUMMARY: (Leave Blank)

(C-NOFORN) The following information, in synoptic form, concerning personnel changes and problems in the German military intelligence hierarchy was obtained during recent conversations with reliable contacts, Bundeswehr officers currently assigned to the Ministry of Defense (MOD), Bonn, and the ASBw, Cologne.

a. Brigadier General Heinrich Seeliger, former Commander of the ASBw, retired in May 1967. He was succeeded by Brigadier General Armin Eck, former Commandant of the Bundeswehr Intelligence School in Bad Ems. Colonel Hasso von Zingler, Deputy Commander of the ASBw, retained his position. Under the regime of Seeliger who always displayed exemplary social decorum but no particular interests or ability in security/intelligence matters, von Zingler occupied a dominant position in Headquarters, ASBw. With the advent of Eck, a strong leader and a capable intelligence officer, this situation changed rapidly, and von Zingler soon lost his influential status; furthermore, the two officers have diametrically opposed personalities, and their wives are not compatible either. Consequently, the relations between the Commander and Deputy Commander became strained and now appear to have reached a point requiring remedial action. During September 1967, von Zingler was offered a transfer to the J2 Staff, MOD, in Bonn, as Branch Chief of Fue S II 6, Military Security and Clearances, a position occupied until recently by Colonel Fritz Rosenhauer. Von Zingler declined this position and evidently anticipates a more promising offer. Although the true reasons for this refusal are not known, it is speculated that von Zingler does not desire to serve on the staff of Rear Admiral Guenther Poser (Fue S II), the current J2, MOD/FRG. In the meantime, in late September 1967, von Zingler went on an extended 'Kur', a recuperative leave, allegedly on account of a kidney ailment not necessarily attributable to a volatile atmosphere in the office. He is expected to return to duty during late November or early December.

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17. DOWNGRADING DATA:

18. ATTACHMENT DATA:

Encl: Copy of 'STERN' article, 1 Oct 67, entitled: Wer wird der neue Spion-gechef? in original German text, 5 pages.

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1967. The estimated date for his anticipated transfer to an as yet unknown assignment, is spring 1968. A prospective replacement has not been mentioned.

b. Colonel Rosenhauer's vacancy was created by the promotion of Colonel Hans Pilster, Chief of Section Fue S II 2, and Deputy J2 under Admiral Poser. Pilster's promotion, although expected for a long time, became effective 2 October 1967. On or about 4 October he is scheduled to depart for a new assignment at the Federal Intelligence Agency (BND - Gehlen Organization) in Munich. One contact referred to Pilster as a weak commander but a strong intelligence staff officer who demanded maximum efforts from his subordinates (facetiously diagnosed as the cause for heart attacks suffered recently by several J2 staff officers); an avid reader, proficient writer and elegant public speaker, Pilster ingratiated himself with Poser and other high ranking and Bundeswehr and governmental officials. Another contact summarized in a humorous vein, Pilster's major attributes for promotion to brigadier general and transfer to BND as follows: "He is a capable intelligence staff officer, a gentleman and a magician also called egg-beater (Schaumschlaeger). He could analyze a flimsy piece of information evaluated F-6, subject this information to his famous 'egg-beating process', resulting in a fine intelligence product evaluated A-1. He is fully qualified to become a general with BND". Rosenhauer, highly regarded by all concerned, is replacing Pilster at the MOD.

c. Rosenhauer's former position is being filled by a Lieutenant Colonel (fnu) Ruhe. Further background information is not available except that he is an Air Force officer who served at one time on the J2 staff of MOD/FRG. Ruhe was described by one contact as a very fine commander and a capable intelligence staff officer who would undoubtedly be promoted in the near future in spite of the unfortunate fact that he had been married twice and both wives committed suicide. This, the contact pointed out facetiously, is not a requirement for promotion in the Bundeswehr.

d. The main topic of discussion and speculation was and still is, of course, the likely replacement for Reinhard Gehlen, Major General (Ret) and current President of the BND, upon his projected retirement in March/April 1968. A UPI press release dated Bonn, 18 September 1967, announcing in positive terms that Federal Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger had nominated Lieutenant General Gerhard Wessel to succeed Gehlen, cannot be regarded as a final decision. Influential functionaries of the Socialist Party (Socialistische Partei Deutschland - SPD) propose to have a prominent SPD member become BND president or at least, vice-president. A similar and successful effort was made in 1966 when Dr. Guenther Nollau (SPD) was eventually installed as Vice President of the BfV, as reported previously. Furthermore, the SPD prefers to have a qualified civilian rather than a military man, even though retired, assume the BND presidency. The only SPD candidate mentioned so far having an intelligence background is Dr. Guenther Redding, Chief of the LfV/Hamburg. Others are being considered and several have been openly listed in the press. The 1 October 1967 issue of 'STERN', a weekly publication, contains an article on the same topic, including background information on Wessel, Gehlen (his organization), and other persons. A copy of the STERN article entitled: "Wer wird der neue Spionagechef?" (Who will be the new espionage chief?) is enclosed hereto. One other possible candidate, not mentioned before, is Hans-Juergen Wischnewski, currently the Minister for Aid and Economic Cooperation. Wischnewski is reportedly the favorite of two leading SPD officials, Willy Brandt, Foreign Minister, and Herbert Wehner, Minister for All-German Affairs. Wischnewski, born 24 July 1922 in Allenstein, East Prussia, joined the SPD in 1946, was active in trade and labor unions, became a member of parliament in 1957, and a minister when the current coalition government was formed

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in December 1966. He made numerous trips to Africa, participated in several conferences pertaining to that continent, and is considered an expert on African affairs. He has no experience in intelligence.

Wessel, on the other hand, is a highly competent and experienced intelligence officer. Until recently he was Germany's Charge d'Affaires at the Standing NATO Military Committee in Washington. He is currently on leave in the Bonn area until he assumes his new duties at NATO Headquarters in Brussels. During the week 18-23 September 1967, Wessel had arranged for appointments with Kiesinger for two different dates; each time Kiesinger was unable to keep the appointment due to other pressing commitments. At this time it was speculated that Kiesinger did not want to commit himself, hoping to retain Gehlen for an extended period. However, on 27 September 1967, Wessel finally met with Kiesinger at the Chancellery in Bonn and the two had a lengthy conversation. At the conclusion of the conference, Kiesinger assured Wessel that he would be nominated Gehlen's successor. Kiesinger anticipated eventual approval by the SPD element of the coalition cabinet. After this meeting, Wessel visited Dr. Hans Speidel (Bundeswehr General Ret) who resides in the Honnef/Bonn area. The purpose of this visit is not known. However, Speidel and Wessel are close friends and the former is frequently consulted. Wessel indicated that should he become the next BND president in 1968, he would have to clean house by removing some of the 'dead wood'. Wessel also expressed his intention to transfer several intelligence staff officers from MOD to BND/Munich; thus, more personnel changes are pending.

e. In response to a query concerning Poser's status and future career, one contact replied: "No Comment", and another snorted: "Der bleibt wo er ist. Keiner will ihn haben" (He stays where he is, nobody wants him).

COMMENTS: Many ASBw officers and possibly enlisted and civilian personnel too, may be aware of the strained relations between the Commander and his Deputy. This situation, however, is not considered of sufficient magnitude to exert adverse effects on the operational efficiency and the overall security of that organization.

Although no official statement or press release is available announcing the retirement of Gehlen and his possible successor in 1968, it is felt that should such personnel action materialize, the most-qualified and likely aspirant for the BND presidency currently under consideration is Wessel. The impact of such a projected change and the effects of the reported changes in MOD intelligence personnel, cannot be fully assessed at this time but appear to be promising developments.

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