SUBJECT INTEL CALL
Unique Published Reference to Molotov – Ribbentrop Meeting in 1943

ACTION REQUIRED – REFERENCES

1. The recent published work of the late Basil Henry Liddell Hart, <u>History of the Second World War</u> (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1971), contains a unique account of a diplomatic encounter between Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov and the late Joachim von Ribbentrop which has aroused interest. It is generally accepted that these gentlemen last met in November 1940. Liddell Hart states that there was a meeting behind German lines in Russia during June 1943.

2. The citation is on page 488. It is the period before the great battle of Kursk salient, which General Gehlen's book describes as the last strategic effort of the German armed forces in Russia. According to the British author, "In June, Molotov met Ribbentrop at Kirovograd, which was then within the German lines, for a discussion about the possibilities of ending the war. According to German officers who attended as technical advisers, Ribbentrop proposed as a condition of peace that Russia's future frontier should run along the Dnieper, while Molotov would not consider anything less than the restoration of her original frontier; the discussion became hung up on the difficulty of bridging such a gap, and was broken off after a report that it had leaked out to the Western Powers."

3. We have learned that Liddell Hart's publisher claims to have raised this point in a conversation about the manuscript several weeks before the author's death. Liddell Hart reportedly said he expected the story of the Molotov-Ribbentrop

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meeting to be questioned, but that he had data to support it which he would, when the occasion arose, show to the publisher. The publisher claims to have sought the data among the deceased historian's records, but without avail. The publisher, nevertheless, considers the story to be authentic.

4. It is apparent that Liddell Hart's account is based on the statements of German officers. The British historian did interview many German officers of all ranks after World War II. Reasons of state would make the disclosure of information about this reported event politically undesirable for the countries directly involved in the reported meeting, and perhaps for other countries as well.

5. (_____), who has professional access to General Gehlen, intends to raise the Liddell Hart report informally with the General. Although we think the likelihood of a confirmation is not strong, it is probably better to approach Gehlen this way than through official channels.

6. This story about the previously unknown diplomatic meeting is mainly of historical interest, but it is a useful conversation piece, we believe, for intelligence officers with German official contacts. This would be true in Munich and Bonn, at least, and we are sure the story will interest ___. There may be among the German contacts of the Station persons who have some knowledge of the event reported by the British historian. If so, we would be very interested to learn of it.