

S E C R E T

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SUBJECT: GEHLEN and The BND

1. As it turned out, the weekend stopover in Munich provided the opportunity for a longer and more relaxed conversation with GEHLEN than I have had in many years. Our first conversation was in the familiar setting (originally Martin Borman's bedroom and for seven years my office) of his office, starting at half past three on the 29th of November when I was accompanied by []

[] At GEHLEN's suggestion, I stayed on after [] had departed in order to visit [] who was recovering from a series of two operations following a complicated case of appendicitis. GEHLEN's driver (16 years in this capacity on the coming 27th of February) delivered me to my hotel in Munich after six and picked me up at twelve noon on Saturday the 30th to spend Saturday afternoon with GEHLEN and his family at home in Berg/Starnberger See.

2. My specific purpose in seeing GEHLEN was taken care of in less than thirty minutes on the first afternoon, and was limited exclusively to a discussion of the operational environment in the UAR, the nature of the very high priority USSR technical targets in Egypt, our estimate of the access enjoyed by Germans to critical targets, and a proposal that our cooperation in this area (the targets are all critical for the NATO Forces in Europe) be intensified. I brought him best wishes from Salah Nasir in Cairo; we talked very briefly about the Middle East situation.

3. Because much of what Gehlen had to say about Germany, the new Government, his own problems and the European situation seemed to me to fall into the category of information with which my colleagues in Germany are familiar, I have not attempted to reconstruct our conversation in detail; instead I attempted to set down the more important impressions and some of the specifics which relate to them. My preparation for discussing things German or European consisted of a weekend conversation in Athens with [] who described his recent exchange with GEHLEN, a dinner conversation with Gordon Stewart in Frankfurt on the 28th of November (travelling from Cairo to Munich via Frankfurt in order to see Stewart in advance of my own meeting with GEHLEN), and a hurried luncheon conversation with [] immediately after my arrival in Munich.

GEHLEN

4. Until I left Munich in 1956, GEHLEN gave almost his entire time and energy to the task of getting the BND established and accepted by Bonn. He took no vacations; he had no avocations; even his responsibilities as the Head of his family were discharged in a brusque and efficient manner in the rare minutes he could allocate for this purpose. Indeed, the pressures that resulted from his wife and children sharing the house in which he had his office in the late 'forties were such that I had conspired with his staff to acquire a modest Bavarian house near Berg on the Starnberger See in which his family could be installed.

5. When I departed from Munich in 1956 [] and [] joined me in interesting GEHLEN in buying the 22 foot, mahogany hull sailing yawl with a 15 square meter mainsail which

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I had owned during all of my years in Munich. Although GEHLEN had never sailed, the proximity of the Starnberger See to his home, and the fact that his children were reaching the age when sailing would be appealing to them, resulted in his purchasing my boat for DM 700. An afternoon with GEHLEN and his family confirms reports that GEHLEN has become an avid sailor, a member of the Ammer See Yacht Club, a designer of experimental rigging, and the owner of three sailing craft - my old conservative "M" class boat which has been reconditioned and has the appearance of a new boat, a smaller "H" class yawl which is the most popular (and very sporting) racing class in Germany's inland lakes and, finally, a larger and heavier British boat with twin keels, a small cabin and an auxiliary motor. The British boat, also in magnificent condition, was on a trailer in the rear of GEHLEN's home covered over with a polyethelene cover. It is this boat that GEHLEN and his family moved from the Chiem See to Starnberger See and to the Ammer See. GEHLEN has found a more or less retired boat builder in Starnberg who, I would guess, spends much of his time making minor modifications on GEHLEN's boats. Sailing and his three boats has apparently provided the outlet for GEHLEN's insuppressible interest in gadgetry; I observed that the 1963 Mercedes 220 has remained relatively "stripped down". GEHLEN confided that he is looking forward with interest to the annual British boat show in London in January 1964.

6. GEHLEN has aged little in the recent years. He seemed to have a vigorous appetite. Perhaps he smokes fewer cigars. As always, he does not drink alcohol in any form. A noticeable limp is, I learned, the result of a recent twisting of the leg in the "H" yawl, and neither gout nor the circulatory problems that one might suspect. He has obviously sunk his roots into the little village of Berg. In contrast to former years, he seems to have lost his inhibitions about acknowledging his residence there. Aside from the usual trained German Shepherd watch dog, there were no signs of unusual security arrangements. In a most non-chalant manner (no dark glasses) he took me to lunch in the small "Strand" hotel a few hundred yards below his home, pleasantly exchanging greetings with the proprietor and several other guests in the small dining room. In response to my expressed admiration for the unchanged beauty and tranquility of the area surrounding Berg and his home, he replied, "I have become attached to it. I have no other desire than to remain here until the day I die."

THE GEHLEN CLAN

7. I found Catherine temporarily living with her two children in the house adjoining GEHLEN's home. It is a leased property; the housekeeper is the widow of a deceased ex-colonel of the BND; the house normally serves as a guest house for GEHLEN's visitors who qualify for this kind of neighborly treatment. Christoph, having married the attractive daughter of Georg BUNTROCK (one of the original six who saw the end of the war with GEHLEN in the mountain hut above Schliersee), joined us later in the afternoon. He has become a tall, surprisingly poised and rather attractive young man nearing the end of his formal training as a physicist. Although he now lives near Pullach, he and his new wife figure prominently in the photographic record of the sailing during the previous summer. Maria Theresa, the second eldest daughter, has upset her father's plans to send her to us for a period of education in the U.S.A., by becoming engaged to an "acceptable young man". She was sent off to Sweden (under the influence of her cousin from Rome whose mother is Swedish) and

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successfully completed her interpreter's examinations in Swedish after her return. GEHLEN has living in his household Giovanni's daughter (the cousin from Rome) and a young nephew of nineteen who is convalescing from a heart operation. Peter, another nephew who was a worry to GEHLEN some years back, has emerged as a promising officer in the Bundeswehr. I was impressed throughout the afternoon that all of the young people remotely connected with GEHLEN have gone far in studying foreign languages. I remarked to GEHLEN that the young German general staff officer who had avoided foreign travel and the study of foreign languages in the 'twenties and 'thirties as a means of avoiding intelligence staff duties had indeed gone far astray from the course he plotted for himself. As his children grow up, marry and the size of the clan grows, as he has gradually come to think of his home on the Starnberger See as a new-home for an up-rooted Pomeranian family; and finally, as the members of his family find their personal and official life ever more interrelated, the GEHLEN family has gradually taken on the complexion of a clan. Catherine spoke of family excursions with the several sailboats meeting in the small cove in the southside of the Roseninsel as if it were an established pattern.

THE [] CASE

8. [] has told me after each of his visits to Germany in the past year that he had found the effect of this case on our relations with the BND to be greater than he had believed. I have gotten this same impression from several other people during recent months. When the matter came up, as I had assumed it would, I recounted to GEHLEN a recent conversation with Dick Helms in which he spoke most warmly and unequivocally on the BND and GEHLEN. At the same time, Helms had put the matter in context of the ups and downs of the U.S. and German relations in the past few years, the narrow political margin in which both GEHLEN and we must operate in our respective countries, and the impact of press attacks which take a fragment of near truth and develop from it full-blown press exposes of the most damaging character.

9. After making this point, I changed the subject by drawing from my pocket newspaper clippings giving an account of my youngest brother who, as a student in Innsbruck had been a house guest of the GEHLENS, and had earlier known Catherine when she was a student in New York. I had written a personal note to Catherine on the margin of a clipping and asked him to kindly pass it to her with my best wishes. I think it was at this point that he made the decision to ask me to openly call [] who was convalescing in the BND hospital in the compound. He sent me in his car and I was ushered into the hospital with no delay -- obviously announced by telephone in the few minutes it took me to reach it. Entering the hospital room alone, I found a rather pale and weak [] who at first seemed unsure whether he should remain withdrawn and formal or participate in what was obviously a GEHLEN operation to try and clear the air. Thirty minutes later when I took my leave, I had in my hand the address and telephone number of the house he and Catherine will occupy in Paris, a standing invitation to stay with them when passing through Paris, and had made a close examination of the evidence of a double incision on the abdominal wall.

10. With Catherine the next day I found it harder going. Her initial greeting to me as I entered her living room with her father was hospitable but cool. As the afternoon went on and we went through coffee and cake, the arrival from an afternoon nap of

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her two small children, a good deal of reminiscing and another hour together with her mother. There were occasional moments in which she lapsed into something approaching the relationship we enjoyed when she lived with us in the U.S. I came away with the impression that she had been hurt rather severely by the whole episode.

GEHLEN AND NATO

11. From the day in 1942 when GEHLEN first articulated to WESSEL his conviction that Germany's defeat in World War II would be followed by the emergence of two great power blocs headed by Russia and America, he has been an unwavering advocate of an Atlantic Community. To achieve this he foresaw an absolute necessity for a Bonn-Washington alliance enjoying undisputed priority in the new German foreign policy. A German-French rapprochement as the basis for uniting Europe was granted undisputed second priority. Bringing the British into the European family was always regarded as an essential though difficult third step. Underlying this formulation of the new world in which Germany would arise from defeat was the oft-voiced conviction that "the National State" and "European Nationalism" would not be important in a world dominated by the immense power of Russia and the U.S.

12. I suspect that GEHLEN has, in the years since he gained official status and a growing degree of independence of our political and material support, been undergoing a continual process of readjusting his earliest concepts and estimate which fitted so well the first decade of the postwar period. It would be neither accurate nor just to attribute his behavior politically to the image of the unreconstructed German Nationalist who has cynically bent before the storms that have swept Germany since World War I and the days of the Reichswehr. A few months ago he told me that looking back over the past fifteen years, the recovery of the European countries individually from the war, the containment of the Communist threat to the Free World and the creation in both the Soviet Bloc and the Free World of conditions conducive to an ultimate settlement of the problems left from World War II, had gone better than he had ever estimated in the first dark years of the Cold War. I personally bear no doubts about the genuineness of GEHLEN's political convictions in the decade following the defeat of HITLER's Germany. He did not foresee a Germany as economically vigorous as the Bundesrepublik is today. Pre-occupied with the qualities of postwar France political life which raised questions of her very survival, he had probably failed entirely to project the image of DeGAULLE's France of today. Finally, he almost certainly was high in his estimate, at the turn of the 'forties and 'fifties, of prolonged internal instability in Western Europe and the likelihood of a Soviet military move to the English Channel.

13. GEHLEN is a man who, while giving fully to the present, has spent his life whiffing the winds of change and has made timely arrangements to readjust his own course. His current re-appraisal probably started in 1955 -- the year of our peace treaty with Bonn (creating the conditions for the legalization of the BND), the year the Soviets exploded the hydrogen bomb in which the present balance in Europe is based, and the last year of his dependence on us for material support.

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14. I do not believe that GEHLEN has written off the Atlantic Community; nor has he reached any final conclusion on the ultimate decisive character of the Bonn-Washington relationship. I doubt very much, however, that he sees the world as he did in the early 'fifties, and I suspect that he may be reassessing the role of the European States both individually and collectively.

15. At lunch on the 29th of November, GEHLEN, in discussing the likelihood of an ultimate settlement of Eastern Europe based on a projection of the political developments of the past two years-- with emphasis on the U.S. and Soviet detente and the emergence of the Moscow-Peking rift--found it appropriate to review the BONIN contact with the Soviets some years ago, and the overtures made to him through Soviet intelligence channels for a reunification of Germany based on acceptance of non-alignment without arms limitations as a National state. This "exchange" ended with the purge of ZHUKOV. It is the Berlin problem far less than the security of West Germany or Europe that lends real urgency to the retention of the U.S. divisions in Germany. Were it not for Berlin it is probable that the Germans would be willing to risk the security of Western Europe on a revised division of defense responsibilities with a drastically reduced U.S. military presence in Europe -- assuming of course a continued nuclear tactical capability in Europe. GEHLEN, unlike many of the officials in Bonn acknowledges, while clearly not advocating it, the logic of President Eisenhower's recent statements proposing the redistribution of the elements which make up the Western defense complex. GEHLEN expressed the hope that the U.S. would leave "at least two divisions" in Europe for "political reasons."

16. I do not think it is going too far to conclude that GEHLEN now sees Germany and Europe entering a period in which the circumstances underlying his "special relationship" with us will be, along with the Marshall Plan, a part of a closed chapter of history. His gratitude for our unique contribution will not be diminished; but the relevancy of our position in the past to the day-to-day business in the future will be increasingly limited.

17. There is also the fact that GEHLEN's highly personalized domination of German intelligence extends without interruption back into the late years of the war; he has survived all of his counterparts in NATO; he is in this sense the dean of the Western Intelligence World. In the past few years his own relationships with the Europeans has grown; his personal ties with America have declined. The passing of the DULLES family, ADENAUER's final desire to consummate the rapprochement of France and Germany in his own lifetime, and the early indifference of the KENNEDY Administration to Germany further contributed to the erosion of GEHLEN's orientation. After GEHLEN's last visit to Washington in 1961 he told his old friend John BOKER in New York that he had "found it difficult to communicate."

18. While there is some disagreement on the severity of the damage, the affect on GEHLEN of the DURRWANGER case has been a major factor in the past year. Perhaps more than the official

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embarrassment - which he presumably minimized with a plausible cover story - was the impact on his eldest daughter who, among all of his children, had committed herself most openly to the pro-American image of the early years. I have no doubt that GEHLEN, observing his own diminishing margin of support with ADENAUER in his last year, and the destructive campaign waged against us in the Viet Nam case, has come to fully understand the political wisdom underlying our position. In spite of this, the manner in which we handled the whole affair and inevitable bitterness felt within the family have cast an unhappy shadow on the American image.

19. Had the Government elected to retire GEHLEN - with appropriate gestures of recognition - he would have entered politics. Indeed, GEHLEN has probably a definite intention to enter politics when he retires in a little over three years. While he professes to have no real illusions about the character of DeGAULLE's Government, he does not seem entirely confident that Germany may not succumb to a kind of Gaullist movement around the personality of Franz Joseph STRAUSS.

20. Certainly no clear concept of the kind of Europe which he feels might emerge in the next few years became apparent in my brief conversations with GEHLEN; I did sense, however, that he feels that the American presence in Europe passed its zenith during the early 'fifties and, if the general trend in U.S. - Soviet and Sino-Soviet relations continue, it is likely that the American presence will be less in the future than it is today. Whether GEHLEN sees this as a good thing or a bad thing is not really relevant to our consideration of the consequences of this to our own position.

21. Our existing relationship is based on the "most favored service" status that was mutually agreed in the understanding spelled out in specific terms in 1956. The benefits which accrue are largely those which relate to the depth of our continuing day-to-day liaison, and the procedural and physical arrangements which stem from the 1956 agreement. Because the majority of the BND staff directly involved in this liaison will, out of both conviction and habit, continue a profitable substantive professional intercourse, and because GEHLEN is unlikely to press hard for any drastic change in the scope and character of the liaison, it will presumably be possible to preserve the status quo for some time. Attempting to implicate GEHLEN personally in this liaison would almost certainly be counterproductive.

22. While GEHLEN is unsettled and apprehensive about the form of the future, he seems to be a long way from convinced that Europe will evolve the way he tentatively estimates. We should make a sustained effort to stay abreast of his activities and his thinking and not permit him to slip into a position of self-imposed isolation. In his present frame of mind he is a vulnerable target for sophisticated operations by those elements in Europe - and particularly some of the French - who would like to re-enforce the discernible trend in his outlook. In the two brief days of contact with the BND I was struck by the number of senior BND officers who had just been or were about to make visits to Paris or London. It was my impression that GEHLEN himself has visited both several times since his last visit in Washington and has apparently no interest in a visit to the U.S. in the foreseeable future.

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23. In summary, the very superficial impression I got on re-visiting the BND was that GEHLEN foresees a growing diminution of the U.S. presence in Europe, is re-enforcing his European ties and initiating a subtle disengagement from the "special arrangements" with us. While political considerations are the principal cause, a number of isolated irritants in the relationship -- including the [L] case -- are factors. In the security field he seems determined to get on with the extremely difficult task of minimizing risks by adopting more stringent measures. Although he feels somewhat isolated from the U.S. and is seeking stronger ties with France and the U.K., he is fully and unhappily aware that neither would be willing or able, should real trouble develop, to play the role that we have played in the past.