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HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES FORCES EUROPEAN THEATER
SCI/CIB G-2 DIVISION
APO 757

15 August 1945

TO : Chief, CIB, G-2, USFET
SUBJECT : Special Interrogation of SS-Sturmbannfuhrer WIRSING

1) Attached is a copy of a report on a meeting between WIRSING and SCHELLENBERG at the end of April 1945. This report is based on a special interrogation of WIRSING for which the brief was prepared on 1 July 1945, by Mr. Reginald PHELPS, then of SCI, 12th Army Group, and describes the circumstances behind the final dissolution of Amt VI of the RSHA.

subject []

ANDREW H. BERDING
Lt. Colonel, A.C.
Commanding.

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HEADQUARTERS
THIRD UNITED STATES ARMY
INTELLIGENCE CENTER
INTERROGATION SECTION
APO 403

25 July 1945

SUBJECT: Meeting between WIRSING and SCHELLENBERG end of
April 1945 -
Special brief Mr. Reginald PHELPS, dated 1 July 1945.

TO : 12th Army Group.

1) Contacts with SCHELLENBERG (First Version)

WIRSING persistently claimed to have seen SCHELLENBERG for the last time when taking leave on 28 March 1945. He repeatedly stated to have taken up residence in HUILERUNK vic BAD TOLE (BAVARIA) and to have stayed there until the day of his capture, denying by implication that he had taken trips of any kind. His subsequent contacts with SCHELLENBERG, he claimed, could be summed up in a report he wrote on President TRUMAN. Aside from that one report, he claimed, he had not taken any active part in political activities.

2) Contacts with SCHELLENBERG (Corrected Version)

When confronted with direct evidence, taken from SAMBERGER's interrogation, WIRSING finally conceded to have seen SCHELLENBERG once more, end of April 1945, in LUBECK. He explained his reluctance that a casual reader of interrogator's report might derive the erroneous impression that he was a man of consequence in the RSHA.

3) WIRSING's Alibi

In his interrogation WIRSING has consistently tried to play down his importance. WIRSING also believes that the handle to his name -- SS-Sturmabfuhrer - is liable to lead an inexperienced interrogator astray, inasmuch as it tends to overshadow his true merits, viz to have disapproved of the Nazi concept of a 'New Order' in Europe and to have gauged Germany's plight correctly at a very early stage of the war.

4) ITINERARY

WIRSING left BERLIN on 1 April 1945 heading South. After a short stay at Burg LAUENSTEIN, one of the hide-outs of Amt VI, he proceeded to TEGERNSEE (BAVARIA), where he had been assigned

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a billet by SANDBERGER and, finding the place overcrowded with refugees at HEBILBRUNN vic BAD TOLZ where he put up in a private residence, retained by PAFFGEN for the key personnel of VI D.

5) CALL TO LUBECK

End of April SCHELLENBERG wired for WIRSING to lock him up at the earliest possible moment. The message was conveyed to WIRSING at BAD TOLZ by SANDBERGER who did not have the telegram on him and who could only offer conjectures as to WIRSING's mission.

WIRSING immediately offered strenuous objections. He told SANDBERGER that he had been out of touch with current developments for the last four weeks and that he did not feel qualified to tender any responsible advice.

6) PROBABLE MISSION

SANDBERGER told WIRSING that he assumed his call to LUBECK had nothing to do with a general report on the political situation and more likely was connected with the negotiations HIMMLER had initiated. SCHELLENBERG probably wanted WIRSING to participate in some form in these negotiations.

7) WIRSING GIVES IN

WIRSING again raised objections, telling SANDBERGER that he did not feel competent in the matter. SANDBERGER, in turn, urged him, to sink all objections inasmuch as SCHELLENBERG probably knew what he was doing. In deference to SANDBERGER's entreaties, WIRSING finally consented to taking the trip.

8) SANDBERGER'S AIDE-MEMOIRE ON AMT VI REFORMS

In the course of their conversation SANDBERGER produced a typewritten aide-memoire, covering one page and sub-divided into paragraphs, which outlined certain reforms to be undertaken on KALTENBRUNNER's orders.

WIRSING claims not to recollect the exact contents of the aide-memoire and who had signed it. The gist of it was that responsibilities were divided up between WARECK and SKRZENY, with GOTTSCH having been assigned to some sort of liaison job.

SANDBERGER asked WIRSING to take the paper along with him to LUBECK and to show it to SCHELLENBERG.

9) WIRSING ON ILLUSORY CHARACTER OF REORGANIZATION

WIRSING told SANDBERGER that he considered any basic reorganization of Amt VI as out of keeping with the stark reality of Germany's impending military defeat. For this reason he did not pay any particular attention to detail. He noticed however and immediately commented upon the fact that the aide-memoire made no mention of SCHELLENBERG.

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10) SANDBERGER COMMENTS ON REORGANIZATION

SANDBERGER concurred with WIRSING to the extent of admitting that the reforms amounted to a virtual dissolution of Amt VI.

He emphasized that the solution arrived at was fraught with dangerous implications.

11) SANDBERGER ON WANECK AND SKORZENY

WANECK was altogether unsuited for the job, SANDBERGER stated.

The choice of SKORZENY he described as grotesque. SKORZENY had neither the military background nor the experience in intelligence work necessary for the job.

12) SANDBERGER ON AMBIGUITY OF ORDER

SANDBERGER pointed out that the aide-memoire had left one very important question unanswered:

Was the order to apply to the whole of Germany, or was it confined to the South of Germany which by virtue of the power of attorney given by HIMMLER had come under KALTENBUNNER's jurisdiction?

13) SCHELLENBERG's EXCLUSION

SANDBERGER pointed out that the reorganization as outlined in the aide-memoire could be taken as a dismissal of SCHELLENBERG by implication.

WIRSING asked SANDBERGER whether one could construe the reorganization as forming the basis for plans entertained by KALTENBUNNER to continue resistance in the redoubt area and also as a disavowal of SCHELLENBERG's attempts at reaching a negotiated surrender to the Western Allied through Count BERNADOTTE as intermediary?

SANDBERGER conceded that this was a possible interpretation.

14) REASONS FOR SCHELLENBERG's DISMISSAL

SANDBERGER told WIRSING that WANECK did not mention the name SCHELLENBERG until SANDBERGER asked him point blank. WANECK passed the matter off in a dilatory fashion and SANDBERGER did not see any sense in pressing the issue.

SANDBERGER summed up that from his conversation with WANECK he carried away the strong impression of having been witness to a 'Lilliputan rebellion' resulting in SCHELLENBERG's ouster.

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15) WIRSING TAKES OFF

SANDBERGER made a last appeal to WIRSING's sense of responsibility. He argued that WIRSING knew very well that SCHELLENBERG would have nobody by his side in case surrender negotiations should begin in earnest, unless WIRSING joined him. WIRSING left by plane from BAD KIBLING air-strip the same day (April 30).

16) MEETING WITH SCHELLENBERG

Upon his arrival at LUBECK on the evening of 30 April WIRSING learned that SCHELLENBERG had left for COPENHAGEN.

WIRSING then proceeded by plane to FLESBURG where he met SCHELLENBERG just back from COPENHAGEN.

The conversation between WIRSING and SCHELLENBERG took place in the latter's private car and lasted several hours.

17) FAILURE OF A MISSION

SCHELLENBERG started off by telling WIRSING that his trip to LUBECK had been superseded by events.

In the face of CHURCHILL's categorical refusal not to entertain any offer of surrender confined to the Western Allies, negotiations with Count BERNADOTTE had irrevocably broken down.

18) SCHELLENBERG ON BERNADOTTE NEGOTIATIONS

SCHELLENBERG talked at some length about his negotiations with BERNADOTTE. No new developments had come to the fore. In this connection SCHELLENBERG characterized HIMMLER as the prototype of a man who can never take the right decision at the right moment.

19) WIRSING ON BERNADOTTE NEGOTIATIONS

From listening to SCHELLENBERG's account WIRSING derived the impression that he had failed to see these contacts in their right perspective, viz against the backdrop of Germany's inevitable military defeat. Otherwise, WIRSING believes, SCHELLENBERG would have not followed up this particular tack with so much fanatical zeal (Verbissenheit).

20) SCHELLENBERG ON AMT VI REORGANIZATION

SCHELLENBERG read the aide-memoire, the gist of which was apparently known to him, and passed it off with a shrug of the shoulders.

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Commenting upon his (implied) dismissal as chief of Amt VI he only said: 'At five minutes to twelve they take time out for a thing like that!'

He made no derogatory remarks about KALTENBRUNNER and took the matter with perfect equanimity. This, in WIRSING's opinion, proves his estimate of SCHELLENBERG as a man of stature to be correct.

21) SCHELLENBERG ON WANECK

WANECK, SCHELLENBERG stated, was not exceptionally gifted for intelligence work and had been put in charge of VI E only at the request of KALTENBRUNNER. He doubted that WANECK was a man with much vision.

22) SCHELLENBERG ON SKORZENY

About SKORZENY, SCHELLENBERG spoke with a great deal of acerbity.

His appointment to take charge of the military sector was merely the culmination of an intrigue of long standing. SKORZENY was the type of a mercenary (Landsknecht) who would probably cause a great deal of mischief while the German people would have to foot the bill.

23) WIRSING PROTESTS WEREWOLF MISCHIEF, SCHELLENBERG CONCURS

When WIRSING expressed his indignation at the 'nihilistic' Werewolf propaganda in German broadcasts, SCHELLENBERG hastened to reply that he had endeavored to stop this mischievous practice. He added that he considered the incitement of children a downright crime.

To WIRSING's great astonishment SCHELLENBERG averred that HIMMLER too was opposed to the Werewolf propaganda. Obergruppenfuhrer PRUTZMANN had been attached to HIMMLER's staff upon HITLER's specific orders.

24) SCHELLENBERG PROMISES FURTHER ACTION

When WIRSING stated that this explanation was not in accord with the facts - only a few days ago the MUNICH station had broadcast a Werewolf proclamation - SCHELLENBERG appeared impressed and promised to bring up the matter again. He added however: There are strong indications that HIMMLER was unable to assert himself against GORBBELS.

25) SCHELLENBERG's pre-occupation with Bernadotte Contacts

WIRSING gained the impression that SCHELLENBERG, even at this late hour, concentrated all his energies upon creating

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domestic conditions conducive to resuming contact with the Western Allies.

HIMMLER, SCHELLENBERG complained, had failed to live up to his promises and no assistance from that corner would be forthcoming.

26) SCHELLENBERG ON KALTENERUNNER

When asked to comment on KALTENERUNNER's role, SCHELLENBERG stated:

KALTENERUNNER is cooking his own broth in Austria.

I would not be the least bit surprised if his connections with the Austrian underground movement enter into the game. In the end KALTENERUNNER is bound to get caught in the very trap he has baited so carefully for his opposite number.

27) WIRSING'S COMMENT ON POLITICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN KALTENERUNNER AND SCHELLENBERG

KALTENERUNNER and SCHELLENBERG never saw eye to eye in matters of political strategy.

Around Christmas time 1944 WIRSING had a talk with KALTENERUNNER in the Japanese Embassy during a dinner party of Ambassador OSHIMA. WIRSING tried to press his main argument home (see special report on EGMONT Lageberichte), viz that a cleavage among the Allies would be a windfall, to base Germany's foreign policy on the expectation of such an occurrence a fatal error.

KALTENERUNNER suggested to WIRSING to have another long talk on the political situation. WIRSING mentioned this to SCHELLENBERG and asked for his advice what topics to touch upon. SCHELLENBERG's answer was:

Try to make KALTENERUNNER realize that matters of world policy are not synonymous with South-Eastern policy and that the decisive questions of Germany's foreign policy cannot be decided from a vantage point in Europe's backyard.

28) WHAT NOW?

Before winding up their conversation, SCHELLENBERG asked WIRSING: What Now?

WIRSING's answer: All you can try to do now is pick up where we left off in February/March 1945 (see special report on EGMONT Lageberichte), viz to disband the NSDAP and the

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Gestapo and to create all the necessary conditions for a transition period in which BRUNING could play his part. ✓

29) SCHELLENBERG DROPS ALL RESTRAINT

WIRSING was struck by the candor with which SCHELLENBERG discussed all the topics brought up during their conversation.

In his thoughts Amt VI was evidently a thing of the past that had been written off or at least been relegated to a matter of secondary importance.

30) SCHELLENBERG ON GERMAN ATROCITIES

When WIRSING made a passing reference on conditions found by Allied troops in German Concentration Camps, SCHELLENBERG replied:

I am fully aware of the significance of the Allied propaganda.

WIRSING:

I am not talking about propaganda, I am talking about the facts.

SCHELLENBERG:

I had nothing whatever to do with the executive, but I would not be the least bit surprised if the competent people who always caused trouble, have perpetrated deeds which will be put to the discredit to the whole German people.

31) WIRSING RETURNS TO BAVARIA

As soon as SCHELLENBERG appraised him of the futility of further attempts to negotiate, WIRSING declared that he saw no sense in staying on in HOLSTEIN and that he would return to BAVARIA to his family and his few remaining belongings. SCHELLENBERG offered no objections.

He offered to arrange for a trip to SWEDEN if WIRSING cared to quit Germany. WIRSING declined. WIRSING returned by plane to HEILBRUNN on 3 May 1945.

32) COMMENT OF SS-STURMBANNFUHRER DR. HOTTL, CHIEF REFERENT OF VI E. RSHA.

SCHELLENBERG'S DISMISSAL

WIRSING's assumption that SCHELLENBERG had been eliminated from the command of Amt VI is absolutely correct. This decision was made by KALTENERUNNER himself, in the presence of WANECK, SKORZENY and DR. HOTTL, at a meeting in Hotel Osterreichischer Hof at SALZBURG around the 25 April.

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KALTENERUNNER DISTRUSTS SCHELLENBERG

In talks that took place around the 20 April in Alt Aussee KALTENERUNNER had already expressed the opinion that he had been double-crossed by SCHELLENBERG who had thrown in his lot with HIMMLER and BERGER.

BERGER'S ROLE

BERGER's power of attorney for South Germany, incompatible with his wish, merely proved to KALTENERUNNER that SCHELLENBERG was in on the game and probably with his usual skill harped on the theme of KALTENERUNNER's Austrian proclivities.

SCHELLENBERG CHIEF POLITICAL ADVISER TO HIMMLER AND BERGER?

KALTENERUNNER was of the opinion that SCHELLENBERG advised HIMMLER and BERGER on matters of general policy. He felt strengthened in his belief after learning through the press of HIMMLER's surrender negotiations with Count BERNADOTTE.

KALTENERUNNER who claimed credit for having introduced Count BERNADOTTE to HIMMLER, was sure that HIMMLER AND SCHELLENBERG would use this connection for their own personal advantage.

NO AUSTRIAN SOLUTION WITH SCHELLENBERG

What decided KALTENERUNNER on parting ways with SCHELLENBERG was the realization that matters had come to a pass where an Austrian solution was the only possible way out.

KALTENERUNNER very likely feared that SCHELLENBERG would pursue his own political line via certain Swiss connections which KALTENERUNNER had reserved for his own use (e.g. DULLES)

KALTENERUNNER'S PERSONAL DISLIKE FOR SCHELLENBERG

KALTENERUNNER had more than once taken up the cudgels in SCHELLENBERG's behalf and for that reason what he conceived to be disloyalty on the part of SCHELLENBERG incensed him even more.

KALTENERUNNER once remarked:

I can almost hear SCHELLENBERG, in his unctuous manner, draw HIMMLER's attention to the dangers inherent in my Austrian separatism. At a skillfully chosen opportunity he will then bring BERGER's personality into the discussion.

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THE OLD AMT VI BEYOND REPAIR

The cue was furnished by DR MUHLMANN who had just returned from INNSBRUCK and who told KALTENERUNNER in SALZBURG (25 April) that SANDBERGER had asked Gauleiter HOFER of TYROL to arrange for billets for the personnel of Amt VI. WANECK and SKORZENY immediately hooked in, telling KALTENERUNNER that there was absolutely no sense in trying to re-activate Amt VI, also in view of the circumstance that, according to SKORZENY, all telephone communications had broken down. SKORZENY also mentioned that the hide-out of Amt VI in Burg LAUENSTEIN had been evacuated in a hurry with American tanks dangerously close and that most of the group chiefs had paid out their personnel, loaded themselves and their secretaries into cars and taken off. Amt VI was therefore a thing of the past.

REORGANIZATION BASED ON VI E AND VI S

Inasmuch as the only groups still existant were VI E (WANECK-HOTTL) and VI S (SKORZENY), a re-organization appeared conceivable only on the basis of the Austrian concept esp in the field of intelligence. To KALTENERUNNER and his advisers it appeared the logical solution to create something similar to the old Amt VI with VI E and VI S as the foundation.

KALTENERUNNER'S ORDER

WANECK, assisted by SKORZENY, immediately drafted an order putting into effect their proposals. KALTENERUNNER SIGNED. Besides giving an outline of the re-organization decided upon, the order directed SANDBERGER to liquidate the old Amt VI in accordance with directives issue by WANECK and SKORZENY for their respective sectors.

/s/ EDMUND L. KING
Major, Inf
Commanding.

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