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DOCUMENT NO. & TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
1. Memo (275492)	Charles Wick to Robert McFarlane re: Bitburg Ceremony, 3p <i>R 6/19/06 F00-103/1 #2</i>	4/24/85	B1
2. draft statement	Re: Bitburg, 1p <i>R " " #3</i>	Nd	B1
3. memo	John Kordek to the Director re: Update, 2p <i>R " " #4</i>	4/25/85	B1
4. memo	Kordek to the Director re: European Attitudes, 2p <i>R " " #5</i>	4/26/85	B1

RESTRICTIONS

P-1 National security classified information [(a)(1) of the PRA].
 P-2 Relating to appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA].

P-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA].
 P-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA].

P-5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA].
 P-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA].

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B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA].
 B-2 Release could disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA].
 B-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA].
 B-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA].
 B-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA].
 B-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA].
 B-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA].
 B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA].



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April 24, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable
Robert C. McFarlane
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
The White House

FROM : Charles Z. Wick *[Signature]*
Director

SUBJECT : Bitburg Cemetery: Foreign Attitudes

Pursuant to my role as principal advisor to the NSC and the President on foreign attitudes, I wish to bring to your attention a summary of West European attitudes on the Bitburg visit and possible Soviet exploitation of this issue for propaganda purposes.

European Attitudes

German press reaction to the controversy over the Bitburg and Bergen-Belsen visits has had three major themes: (1) profound regret that what was meant as a gesture of reconciliation has instead turned into a subject of controversy; (2) sympathy for the President, whose willingness to make the gesture despite political risks was deeply appreciated; (3) acknowledgement that serious errors in judgment were made, with most of the blame directed at the Chancellor.

There has also been escalating partisan controversy surrounding the visit, with the Kohl government coming under sharp attack for alleged poor performance. The CDU has sought to counterattack by citing the "anti-American" stance of elements of the SPD. On April 23, many papers speculated that Kohl could be helpful to the President by dropping Bitburg. There has also been an undercurrent of criticism of the American media for allegedly fanning the emotions of American public opinion on the issue.

The following examples illustrate the range of opinion on the Bitburg question. Arguing the virtue of perseverance, the Westdeutsche Allgemeine states:

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"People should stop trying to make President Reagan revise his itinerary.....Reagan obviously cannot revise it without exposing himself to charges of weakness. He has to go through with it and make the best of it."

Stressing security and the potential for negative publicity, the Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich states:

"(The Bitburg visit) is about to become dangerous for us all...If Reagan's visit comes off according to its tactless plan, German police will have to be prepared to knock down protesting American war veterans and former concentration camp inmates who intend to block his road."

In general, there seems to be a note of bewilderment in the German press that the visit to Bitburg has proved to be so controversial. Most press comment to date has tended to focus on the details of the controversy, without speculating on the long-term impact on West German opinion of a cancellation of a ceremony in remembrance of German war dead. (Additional media reaction reports, Tab B.)

An informal survey of key USIA officers in Europe indicates that Bitburg is also an important issue outside of Germany. Reaction among NATO allies who suffered occupation by the Nazis during World War II is uniform in viewing the symbolism of the Bitburg visit as embarrassing to President Reagan and in so far as it can be construed as a reconciliation with Germany's Nazi past, unacceptable. The allies agree that visiting Bergen-Belsen is the right thing to do, and should have been on the schedule from the start.

The addition of Bergen-Belsen has defused the moral issue in the UK. However, in The Netherlands and elsewhere the addition of Bergen-Belsen has not mitigated the feeling that there is something fundamentally wrong with the President's honoring dead members of the SS by visiting Bitburg.

Likely Soviet Propaganda Use

To date the Soviets have stressed that the Bitburg visit was deliberately chosen to honor the "Hitlerites" and that the visit to Bergen-Belsen is a "blasphemy," added only in response to an "angry wave of indignation." The President's "desire to honor the Nazis" is linked to "military schemes" such as Pershing II deployments. There has been no mention of the President's statement on Nazi atrocities.

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As VE Day approaches, the Soviets can be expected further to exploit the strong emotions stirred by the planned Bitburg visit. Treatment by the Soviets thus far reinforces a number of their principal propaganda themes, e.g., charges that the FRG is revanchist and the heir of the Third Reich and assertions that the U.S. too is tainted by Nazism. Portraying the President as bent on paying homage to the SS complements the long-standing Soviet propaganda campaign depicting the Americans as militaristic because, unlike the Soviets, they have not known the horrors of war on their own soil.

We can also expect the Soviets to summon up the Bitburg example when explaining the lack of an American presence at Soviet victory celebrations: "not only do the Americans refuse to commemorate with us the end of Nazi tyranny over Europe; they put flowers on the graves of the SS!"

Recommendation

We must continue to hope that the Germans will accept responsibility for proposing a changed itinerary. The prestige and authority of the President, his ability to achieve the great ends of his second term, are more important than some of the considerations which have led the Germans thus far to resist a change. Although much of the non-German European media have yet to turn a full spotlight on this issue, it is already clear that, without a change in the current plans, the damage, on both sides of the Atlantic, may extend beyond the President's European trip.

- this morning's news on at least two of the three American networks opened with closeups of Bitburg gravestones;
- the image that American and European publics will carry away from the President's visit to Europe will be that of demonstrators dressed in concentration camp garb being held back by German police.

In the event that an offer of a change would come from the German side, you may then wish to consider having the President address himself, on television, to Americans and Europeans, stressing that the reaction to the Bitburg visit has made accomplishment of the visit's purpose impossible. (Tab A contains suggested language for part of a presidential statement.)

Attachments: As Stated

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SUGGESTED LANGUAGE FOR PART OF A PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT

The purpose of the visit to the cemetery was reconciliation and good will between two great countries. Well-motivated people, perhaps not fully informed at the beginning, scheduled a ceremonial visit to express the fact that the alliance and friendship we have with the Federal Republic of Germany today is so strong, healthy, and beneficial to the West that we are able to recognize the achievement of the peace in 1945 as the beginning of the greatest era of peace the European continent has seen for centuries.

Because we regret that the entire continent does not share in the benefits of that peace, we embrace our Atlantic Alliance with even deeper conviction.....and we can honor together those who fell on the battlefield before that peace was achieved. It was precisely those who fell on the battlefield, their gravesites, that we intended to visit next month, exactly as we have visited similar World War II memorials throughout Europe during these anniversary days.

Equally well motivated people, discovering that the cemetery we intended to visit also contained the graves of those not associated with battlefield honor, were deeply stirred, even offended. I appreciate the fact that in almost no case did they impugn my motives or those of Chancellor Kohl, suggest that we do not share the world's revulsion at the horrors of the Holocaust, or believe that either of us intended an offense.

But now these reactions have created a situation where the purpose of the visit cannot be accomplished. Since its purpose was reconciliation and an expression of goodwill, the overshadowing of those noble objectives by elements of divisiveness and hurt frustrate our initial good intention. Chancellor Kohl has courageously sought to find a way to keep those intentions from being frustrated. We could not find a way that was acceptable to many of those who had taken offense. The Chancellor has therefore suggested that the visit to the Bitburg cemetery be set aside from the schedule of this trip in order that we may achieve the initial purpose of the visit itself. The symbolism of the gesture having been so altered by the controversy it stirred, it is important now to preserve the substantive value of my visit to the Federal Republic. Great issues lie before us, both in the meeting of the seven leaders of the free world and in our bilateral talks with our German allies. It is not to change the high purposes of the trip, but to preserve them, that the Federal Republic has decided to reconsider some of the ceremonial elements of the visit's schedule.

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MEDIA REACTION REPORT FROM THE FRG--April 24, 1985
(LAST MINUTE ADDITION)

The mass-circulation conservative Bild Zeitung carried an interview with Bonn Government spokesman Peter Boenisch. Asked whether the plan for the visit to Bitburg will be changed, Boenisch said: "No, the plan will be adhered to."

Asked about charges that a Reagan visit to Bitburg would amount to a belated victory for Hitler, Boenisch said: "The contrary is true. Hitler tried to make the Germans hate not only the Jews but also our Western allies of today. The close ties especially with the U.S. are precisely the opposite of what Hitler wanted."

Boenisch also said: "The time has finally come for practicing genuine partnership. It must be shown now whether we are considered friends with equal rights. Of whether many people in the West still consider us nothing but Hitler's heirs."

The pro-CDU Frankfurter Neve Presse said in an editorial:

"Reagan and Kohl apparently are concerned about giving rise to doubt about their steadfastness, about their adherence to what they have considered right and useful. Such steadfastness is honorable only until the point where it becomes obvious that the anticipated damage will be much bigger than the envisaged advantage. That point has now been reached. Kohl and Reagan should drop Bitburg from the itinerary."

**United States
Information
Agency**

Washington, D.C. 20547

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Office of the Director

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April 30, 1985

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable
Robert C. McFarlane
Assistant to the President
For National Security Affairs
The White House

FROM : Charles Z. Wick *CW*

SUBJECT : Up-Date on European Attitudes Toward Bitburg
Visit

REFERENCE : My April 25, April 26, and April 29 Memoranda
to you on the Bitburg Visit.

Here is today's report on European attitudes towards the President's planned visit to Bitburg.

I have also attached today's Morning Digest of Foreign Media Reaction, which reports significant media reaction to the Bitburg visit as the lead item.

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Department of State Guidelines, July 21, 1997

By MSH NARA, Date 1/25/01

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CLASSIFIED BY: CHARLES Z. WICK
DECLASSIFY ON: OADR

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April 30, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director
FROM: EU - John F. Kordek
SUBJECT: Up-Date on European Attitudes Toward Bitburg Visit

The Bitburg controversy is over in the FRG, but smolders on elsewhere in Europe. Bonn reports that if the President's visit to Bitburg were cancelled now, there might well be demonstrations on the part of Germans demanding it be rescheduled.

German public opinion and press believe that President Reagan successfully capped the Bitburg controversy during yesterday's televised press conference. The national mood is one of relief untempered by any sense of apprehension over the expected anti-visit demonstrations at Bitburg and/or Bergen-Belsen.

Elsewhere in Western Europe, the feeling has not been dispelled that Bitburg remains an unacceptable symbol of reconciliation. The focus of attention is now starting to shift from what President Reagan will do to what the demonstrators will do at Bitburg.

London reports that the the President of the World Jewish Congress (Europe) yesterday told the Ambassador that the World Congress is going ahead with its plans to protest the Bitburg visit with demonstrations in the FRG. He fears that there may be a violent reaction to the demonstrators. London also reports that the British Legion, a veterans' organization, has joined with Jewish ex-servicemen to protest the visit; and that British MPs are being marshalled to join in denouncing Bitburg.

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Department of State Guidelines, July 21, 1997
By MSN NARA, Date 1/25/01

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CLASSIFIED BY: JOHN F. KORDEK
DECLASSIFY ON: OADR

April 30, 1985

Summary

BONN ECONOMIC SUMMIT

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MURPHY MISSION

Media in Doha, Amman, Damascus and the West Bank judged that the Assistant Secretary of State returned to Washington with little or no success in advancing Mideast peace.....Page 11

FIRST LADIES

The conclusion of last week's drug conference and Mrs. Reagan's role in sponsoring it received widespread attention in Japanese and Panamanian media.....Page 12

BONN ECONOMIC SUMMIT--Up to the eve of the Summit, media preoccupation with the Bitburg cemetery visit overshadowed consideration of the economic issues which were the central purpose for the meeting.

BRITAIN: "Reagan Reaffirms Decision to Visit Bitburg"

London headlines read "Nixon Offers Advice on Bitburg Visit...Defiant Bonn Switches to Offensive Over Visit" (Times), "Bonn Fears 'Spectacular' Attacks During Summit...Reagan Will Not Let Bitburg Row Spoil Economic Summit...Germany Determined to Carry on With Graveside Ceremony" (Guardian), "Flowers on SS Graves as Visit Row Goes On...Slowing Economy Clouds Reagan's 'Cemetery Summit'" (Daily Telegraph), "Reagan Reaffirms Decision to Visit Cemetery...Bonn Tries to Limit Damage of Bitburg Visit" (Financial Times).

Nixon and Kissinger Endorse Visit

Independent Times Washington correspondent Nicholas Ashford noted: "President Reagan, preparing for the first European trip of his second Administration, continued to be buffeted with conflicting advice yesterday about whether or not to go ahead with his controversial visit to the German military cemetery at Bitburg.

"Among those urging him to stick to his plans to honor German war dead as a gesture of reconciliation between former wartime foes were Chancellor Kohl...former President Richard Nixon and Dr. Henry Kissinger, the former Secretary of State..."

"Fear Summit May Be Ruined by Bitburg"

The liberal Guardian's Washington correspondent Alex Brummer reported: "President Reagan said yesterday that he was determined that the Bitburg furor would not interfere with the Bonn Summit when the United States will press its allies to move toward economic expansion..."

"Speaking in the Rose Garden of the White House, Mr. Reagan hoped that the row about his intended visit to the military cemetery at Bitburg would not ruin the Summit of the big seven industrial countries..."

"In addition to the Bitburg upset, simmering disputes about the conduct of economic and financial policy threatened to make the Bonn meeting a testy affair."

Baker's Disavowal

The paper said that "at a White House briefing yesterday, Treasury Secretary, Jim Baker, publicly disavowed a January accord under which the five largest countries agreed to cooperate in currency intervention 'if needed.'"

Terrorist Bombings

The paper carried an AP report that "leftist extremists claimed responsibility for three overnight bomb blasts in Cologne and Dusseldorf in protest at the Summit. The explosions caused extensive damage but no injuries..."

"The 'Bitburg Summit'"

The conservative Daily Telegraph's Washington correspondent Richard Beeston wrote: "President Reagan flies to Europe today for the seven-nation conference in Bonn which his Administration fears may go down in history as the 'Bitburg Summit.'..."

"Mr. Reagan's visit is also clouded by new concerns that the American economy, the 'locomotive' that has to pull Western Europe out of recession, has slowed to a dangerous 1.3 percent growth rate for the first quarter..."

Flowers for the SS

The paper's correspondent at Bitburg wrote: "White House officials who yesterday toured the West German war cemetery at Bitburg...paused to take note of fresh flowers on the graves of SS men buried there..."

"There were few other flowers in the wind-swept hilltop graveyard, but Herr Haller, the Mayor of Bitburg, denied that the flowers on the SS graves might be a gesture of defiance in a controversy which is testing German-American relations to the limit..."

Potential for Anti-Americanism

The Financial Times Bonn correspondent filed: "The intensity of the dispute over the visit to the cemetery has astonished and profoundly upset West German public opinion."

"Although most newspapers here felt yesterday that on diplomatic grounds it probably should have been called off, there is little inclination to blame Herr Kohl alone..."

"What has hurt most is that the efforts of four decades to rebuild the image of Germany, particularly in the United States, its most important ally, have been jeopardized. As a result, it is feared that a new impetus might be given to latent anti-Americanism in West Germany..."

Agenda Items for the Summit

The evening Standard carried this report by the chief European correspondent of the Economist: "The Bonn Summit is likely to have three main items on the agenda--sustaining economic recovery, removing trade barriers, and exchanging views on how to deal with Gorbachev, in the light of his anticipated meeting with President Reagan. Given the recent fall in the U.S. dollar there will be less pressure than he once feared on Reagan to modify his own policies, though all the other leaders think he should do more about the yawning budget deficit..."

"On trade, the summit will call for new multilateral trade talks in the GATT, on the model of the earlier Kennedy and Tokyo rounds....Already a contest is developing between Europeans and Americans over the name of the new negotiations....The Americans are holding out for the 'Reagan round.'..."

FRANCE: "European Tour Has Become a Nightmare"

Paris headlines were "A Lost Opportunity" (Le Monde), "Reagan in Europe: 10 Difficult Days...European Tour Has Become Nightmare" (Figaro) "Visit Under Bad Omen" (Les Echos) and "Reagan Clears Up Murderers" (Communist Humanite).

"Hope for Multilateral Trade Talks"

Washington correspondent Bernard Guetta wrote in today's influential Le Monde: "At the end of the annual Summit of industrialized nations on Saturday, Mr. Reagan hopes to reach an agreement for a speedy beginning to multilateral trade talks....But since mid-April, Mr. Reagan has not only suffered a series of setbacks on the U.S. scene, he has also succeeded in creating a bizarre deadend situation concerning the 40th anniversary of the downfall of Nazism..."

"Mr. Reagan does not need another failure at the Bonn Summit, where he hopes--in the face of mounting protectionism in his country raised by the size of the deficit--to obtain assurances that a new round of trade talks will begin in the first few months of 1986.

"The main obstacle to such talks is France's determination, as repeated Sunday by French President Francois Mitterrand, to launch parallel negotiations for a reform of the international monetary system."

"Reagan's Presidency Blemished"

Washington correspondent Denis Legras observed in conservative Figaro: "The Bonn meeting that begins Wednesday was an obligation--fate had it that it should become a nightmare....There is no doubt that Ronald Reagan will recover (from the problems caused by his planned visit to the Bitburg cemetery), but his Presidency is now blemished..."

"Summit Has Become of Secondary Importance"

Economic Les Echos asserted: "What was planned as a triumphal tour now appears as a difficult exercise in reconciliation. President Reagan's trip...will certainly constitute an opportunity to prove to Europe that the United States is still a source of inspiration..."

"But Mr Reagan's star has been somewhat tarnished since the trip was first planned. His popularity in the polls has dropped from 60 percent to 54 percent (and the planned visit to Bitburg) has raised protests from liberals, Jews and veterans.

"Suddenly, the Bonn Summit became of secondary importance in the eyes of the U.S. media....Reagan will insist for a date to be fixed on multilateral (trade) talks. But the other participants are far from agreeing on this subject..."

WEST GERMANY: "'Last Word Has Been Said'"

Among West German headlines this morning were "Reagan: 'Last Word Has Been Said'--Visit to Bitburg by U.S. President Definite...Mitterrand Makes Conditions: No GATT Negotiations Without Discussions on Reforming Monetary System" (General-Anzeiger), "Reagan's Visit to Bitburg to Last Only Few Minutes" (Die Welt), "Reagan and Bonn Adhere to Bitburg--Boenisch Calls Reference to 'Nazi Town'"

Scandalous" (Bonner Rundschau), "Bitburg Mayor Concerned About Reputation of His Town: 'Americans Are Welcome'" (Westdeutsche Allgemeine), "Bonn Annoyed by Reports in U.S. Media" (Rheinische Post) and "U.S. SDI Plans Not Subject of Discussion at Bonn Summit" (Westfaelische Rundschau).

"Inconceivable to Cancel Visit"

Conservative Die Welt of Bonn observed today, "Both sides have confirmed their decision to include a visit of the cemetery in Bitburg. Given the statements that were made, it is now inconceivable that the visit be canceled..."

"This would create the impression that Reagan and Kohl are unsure of themselves and are prone to be manipulated. But the meaning of the visit is to show that the opposite is true: the President and the Chancellor represent an inalienable alliance."

"Political Damage Cannot Be Fully Assessed"

Liberal Stuttgarter Zeitung held in its main editorial that "whether or not President Reagan decides to cancel (the visit to Bitburg), the political damage cannot yet be fully assessed....Our relations to our most powerful ally...are burdened more heavily than they have ever been since Germany joined the Western Alliance..."

"Chancellor Kohl bears the responsibility for this dramatic failure which has brought the worst crisis in decades upon German-American relations..."

"Heap of Broken China"

Left-of-center Frankfurter Rundschau asserted, "The allied governments in Bonn and Washington are now facing a heap of broken china. They alone have brought it upon themselves. ...Nobody can tear open old wounds without being punished for it..."

"Mr. Reagan's advisers have also failed. But the criticism coming from the conservative right in the United States is shocking..."

"Japan and America Principal Defendants at Summit"

The independent/liberal Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich remarked in a report from Tokyo: "Japan will be one of the principal defendants at this Summit. The other one will be America..."

"The Japanese-American conflict could also affect the EC countries....Bonn must try to make Japan widen its markets to imports as a means of soothing the Americans."

"SDI Not to Be Discussed at Summit"

Pro-Socialist Party Westfaelische Rundschau of Dortmund reported from Bonn: "As indicated by Bonn Government sources, it seems to be certain that U.S. SDI plans will not be a subject of discussion at the Economic Summit. Thus, controversy over U.S. and French plans will be avoided..."

U.S.-German Relations Good

TV coverage last night was dominated by the "Bitburg controversy."

TV Two's monthly public opinion poll "Politbarometer" provided new figures on U.S.-FRG relations. 84 percent judge them as "good," 16 percent as "bad." A majority were convinced that the current "Bitburg controversy" is not going to affect the relations seriously.

ITALY: "Flowers and Swastikas"

With only leftist and pro-Communist papers published yesterday due to a journalists' strike in Italy, these were the available headlines: "Ron, Here Is What the SS Did" (pro-communist Paese Sera) and "Flowers and Swastikas... Reagan Confirms, 'I Will Visit the SS Cemetery'...American Jews Protest" (radical-left Il Manifesto).

"Visit to Bitburg Is Irritating Public Opinion"

Gianni Riotta wrote from New York in radical-left Il Manifesto: "President Reagan's visit to Bitburg...is worrying politicians and irritating public opinion..."

"There is no doubt. Reagan's popularity, his ability to solve the most complicated problems, seem to be used up. His obstinacy in choosing 'reconciliation' makes everybody unhappy..."

"At the Summit"

In a late morning newscast, moderate GR-2 radio's New York correspondent Gastone Ortona reported that "at the Summit, Reagan will have to say that it is unlikely that the U.S. economy will be healthy enough in the next few months to play the role of leader for other economies..."

"Reagan will also reject Mitterrand's request for a reform of the international monetary system....The main problems for Reagan come from his official visit to West Germany..."

SPAIN: "Reagan Starts Tour Under the Shower of Bitburg"

Spanish headlines this morning read "Reagan Starts Europe Tour Under the Shower of Bitburg" (ABC), "Reagan Visits the Old Continent...A Triumphant Tour Becomes a Political Disaster...Europeans Enter the Meeting With No Position in Common" (El Pais) and "Meeting of the 'Seven' With the Holocaust as Background" (Diario 16).

"Ghosts of History Played a Bad Trick"

Left-of-center El Pais's Washington correspondent Basterra said today, "Reagan's trip to Europe has become the most controversial trip of any U.S. President to the Old WorldThe ghosts of history have played a bad trick on Reagan. Bitburg threatens to transform what was initially conceived as a tour of triumph into a political disaster."

U.S. on One Side, Europe on the Other

TVE New York correspondent Carcedo declared, "The Bonn Summit promises to be a battle between the United States on one side, and the European countries on the other."

SWITZERLAND: "Kohl Proved a Bad Friend to Reagan"

Independent Berner Tagblatt today ran a byliner's assertion that "the astonishing thing about this state visit which threatens to become a real scandal is the West German Government's lack of tact, sensitivity and political judgement.

"Certainly Reagan and his advisers must take some of the blame for the situation that has arisen....(But) Kohl has in effect proved a bad friend to President Reagan in all this. He has involved someone who wanted to do him a good turn in a political hurricane."

AUSTRIA: "No Celebration for Reagan"

Vienna's semiofficial Weinger Zeitung said in an article with the above headline: "Arriving in Europe today, he is no longer what he used to be--radiant, victorious Ronald Reagan.

"In the last few days, the U.S. President has suffered a series of defeats seriously impairing his image. It is a combination of foreign and domestic affairs factors which have reversed the trend.

"Cornered, Reagan might prove to be a dangerous Reagan."

"The Bitburg Conspiracy"

A front-page editorial in today's independent Die Presse headlined as above declared: "The fact that needs stressing is that the wish for definitive reconciliation...was not supported precisely by those who, on both sides of the Atlantic, otherwise have a lot to say about this--church leaders, religious leaders of Jewry, humanitarian organizations and intellectuals aware of their sense of responsibility.

"It has shocked us that 40 years after the end of the war and of the crusade against Hitler barbarism, prominent Americans have demonstrated their inward inability to make truce, let alone peace, with the German enemy of bygone days."

SWEDEN: "A Bad Aftertaste"

In Stockholm today, liberal Dagens Nyheter carried an editorial headlined "Reagan-Kohl Gone Astray" which said, "Together, the U.S. President and the West German Chancellor have ruined a good cause. No one could have expected that Ronald Reagan and Helmut Kohl would handle the 40th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe as badly as they have.

"The history of the planned American visit to the German war cemetery in Bitburg will leave a bad aftertaste..."

"Not Even Reagan Can Run Away From History"

An editorial in yesterday's independent tabloid Expressen said, "Bitburg remains his worst headache, although the visit has been reduced to a hasty trip to the cemetery. No one, not even the President of the United States, can run away from history. At least one of his advisers should have considered this."

SOVIET UNION: "Not so Much Reconciliation as Exoneration"

Moscow TASS, commenting today on President Reagan's planned visit to Bitburg, said, "In an effort to dampen the indig-

nation, the White House talks about the 'act of reconciliation' with which, according to him, the 40th anniversary of the victory over Fascism should be marked...

"It would not be amiss to ask with whom this reconciliation should be? Should it be the reconciliation with aggressors and murderers who drenched Europe with blood, with inventors of gas chambers, creators of Dachau and other death camps in which hundreds of thousands of people were exterminated?...

"It looks not so much as a reconciliation but as exoneration of Nazism....Sacrilige is the only right way to describe the tribute of the President of the United States to the 'Third Reich.'"

JAPAN: "Japan Will Attempt to Placate Western Nations"

Today's moderate Yomiuri remarked in an editorial, "The Summit leaders should discuss the advisability of SDI and taking part in SDI research to prevent the issue from damaging Western unity..."

"Japan will attempt to placate the Western nations by stressing its action program to open its markets, which goes into effect in July. However, Japan will come under pressure to stimulate demand and it is doubtful whether its explanations and promises will be fully accepted."

AUSTRALIA: "The Biggest Loser Would Be President Reagan"

The independent Melbourne Age Washington correspondent Geoffrey Barker said yesterday, "While the Bitburg controversy is not directly linked to economic and political issues to be discussed in Bonn...its inevitable prominence will take much of the public spotlight away from those leaders who might be reluctant to move forward cooperatively on the Summit agenda issues--especially those relating to trade liberalization. If this happens, the biggest loser would be President Reagan."

MURPHY MISSION--Media in Doha, Amman, Damascus and the West Bank judged that the Assistant Secretary of State returned to Washington with little or no success in advancing Mideast peace.

QATAR: "Indications That Murphy Mission Has Failed"

In Doha today, semiofficial ar-Rayah stated: "News reports and comments that we have seen indicate that American envoy Richard Murphy's mission has failed, or at least has not fulfilled its aim--agreement on a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, excluding the PLO--for talks with Washington.

"This failure was expected even before Murphy came to the area. That is because the American move still adheres to the same old attitudes of total bias to Israel and rejection of the idea of an international conference with the participation of all parties concerned."

JORDAN: PLO Spokesman "Completely Rejects" Murphy Proposals

Today's independent Jordan Times front-paged a Reuters story from Tunis citing a PLO spokesman as saying "we completely reject the American approach for settlement because Murphy's proposals for a U.S. dialogue with a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation are unacceptable."

The story added that the spokesman "made it clear, however, that the PLO would still be receptive to any new U.S. invitation to the PLO and Jordan."

SYRIA: "Murphy Admitted He Did Not Achieve any Progress"

Government-supported al-Thawra on Saturday wrote: "It is natural for Murphy to admit that he did not achieve any progress on peaceful negotiations in his Mideast tour, that he did not discover new positions with the parties that he met and that Syria is not concerned with his settlement.

"He came to the region with the wrong view because the U.S. Administration thought that the Hussein-Arafat and Mubarak's initiative had created a great change in the region. It seems that Murphy found the opposite since he discovered clearly that Syria's position is a basic one and that when Damascus opposes a settlement it means this settlement can never succeed."

WEST BANK: "Mubarak Admits Murphy's Tour Has Failed"

Rejectionist ash-Shaab claimed yesterday that Egyptian President Mubarak "admits that Murphy's tour has failed."

Rejectionist al-Mithaq contended that Secretary Shultz's planned trip to the area in May is to "save the Murphy mission."

* * * * *

FIRST LADIES--The conclusion of last week's drug conference and Mrs. Reagan's role in sponsoring it received widespread attention in Japanese and Panamanian media.

JAPAN: "Solidarity of Mothers to Wipe Out Drugs"

Liberal Mainichi carried a half-page report April 26 on the conclusion of the two-day drug conference--including a summary, a list of the names of the 18 participating first ladies, photographs of Mrs. Reagan and Mrs. Nakasone and statistics on drug addicts in the United States.

The paper's Washington bureau correspondent Suzuki reported under the above headline that, at the conclusion of the meeting, the participants pledged themselves to unite with mothers of the world in sweeping the earth free of drugs. A catchphrase--"mother to mother"--is being employed, Suzuki said.

Suzuki added that, though the ladies' summit was held because of Mrs. Reagan's deep concern over drug abuse and her awareness of the need to gain the cooperation of drug-exporting nations, it is generally believed that the conference was held because of the influence of President Reagan. The paper also reported that Mrs. Reagan is considering scheduling a larger-scale summit this fall.

PANAMA: "First Ladies Agreed...to Combat Drug Addiction"

The First Ladies' Conference on Drug Abuse received extensive media coverage in Panama. Over the weekend, several TV channels' coverage included parts of the U.S. Information Agency's satellite feed and Agency press releases. TV Two carried shots of Mrs. Reagan and Panama's first lady at the conference on Sunday.

Yesterday's semi-independent daily La Estrella de Panama front-paged a U.S. Information Agency release on the conference under the headline "In U.S., First Ladies Agreed Cooperative Efforts to Combat World Drug Addiction."

"Mrs. Reagan's Effort...Is Praiseworthy"

Government-controlled Matutino yesterday included a byliner commenting favorably on the conference. The paper said, "(Mrs. Reagan's) effort to raise the awareness of the world (about the drug problem) is praiseworthy."



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

April 29, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable
Robert C. McFarlane
Assistant to the President
For National Security Affairs
The White House

FROM : Charles Z. Wick *CZW*

SUBJECT : The President's Visit to Bitburg - European
Attitudes Polarize

REFERENCE : My April 25 and April 26 Memoranda to you on
the Bitburg Visit.

Attached is our latest report on European attitudes towards the President's planned visit to Bitburg.

DECLASSIFIED
Department of State Guidelines, July 21, 1997
By MCN NARA, Date 11/25/01

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CLASSIFIED BY: CHARLES Z. WICK
DECLASSIFY ON: OADR

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

April 29, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director
FROM: EU - John F. Kordek
SUBJECT: European Attitudes Polarize on Bitburg

SUMMARY

Western European attitudes on the President's proposed visit to Bitburg are now dividing into two camps, with a majority of West Germans in favor of the visit and everyone else opposed to it. It is generally agreed inside and outside Germany that Bitburg now overshadows the rest of the President's European trip, and from a press standpoint will be the high point of the trip, no matter how little time the President actually spends in the cemetery.

In the East, communist propaganda claims that Bitburg is not a slip but a conscious US policy to ally itself with the most reactionary elements in Germany feed on popular sentiment against the visit.

WESTERN EUROPE

Western European attitudes have coalesced around three points:

The President is a leader whose alleged lack of historical consciousness is puzzling and sad.

The Bitburg ceremony can make no positive points, except perhaps with the Germans.

As a result of the Bitburg controversy, the Germans will again feel isolated from the rest of Western Europe.

Bonn reports that opinion polls there show an overwhelmingly positive reaction to the President's planned visit to Bitburg. Meanwhile, articles in the German press are beginning to speak more and more of finding a way out of the controversy by substituting another site for Bitburg. Conservative Springer-owned mass circulation Bild Zeitung of Hamburg carries an editorial today noting that Chancellor Kohl would not lose face if he spared President Reagan the visit to Bitburg. It goes on to say that, "all of a sudden it has become obvious how shaky the ground is on which the friendship with former enemies is based." The editorial concludes that "Mr. Reagan is going through the worst crisis of his presidency because of Bitburg."

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CLASSIFIED BY: JOHN F. KORDEK
DECLASSIFY ON: OADR

DECLASSIFIED
Department of State Guidelines, July 21, 1993
By MAN NARA, Date 1/25/01

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

In London, commentators are now writing about the impact of the Bitburg controversy on the FRG's perception of itself, pointing out that it could well lead to a resurgence of Germany's 'pariah mentality'.

This morning's International Herald Tribune in Paris headlined "SS Killer Unit Has Graves in Bitburg: Division that Massacred 642 French Villagers Represented." The French press, which missed the Sunday NYT piece, is expected to take up the story tomorrow.

EASTERN EUROPE and THE USSR

The communist basic propaganda line on the Bitburg controversy, as expected, emerged in a commentary on Soviet TV April 26:

"It is not a slip. It is a policy....For the sake of (its) imperial ambitions, Washington is ready to ally itself with anyone, including past and present Nazis."

In Poland, the media focused on the news of congressional opposition to the visit and the NYT report on the massacre of French villagers by the SS unit represented at Bitburg. An accompanying commentary lambasted President Reagan for "historical and moral nihilism." Sunday's newspapers said that "Reagan and Kohl are trying to change the history of Nazi Germany...". In a private conversation, two Poles commented that the official media are "hoping against hope" that President Reagan will go through with Bitburg as it will provide propaganda fodder for a long time to come.

In Yugoslavia the first articles commenting very critically on the Bitburg visit have begun to appear. Private comment remains very critical as well.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

White House Guide
By LOJ

ED NSC/S PROFILE
August 28, 1997
ite 8/1/02

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TO MCFARLANE FROM WICK, C DOC DATE 29 APR 85
WICK, C 30 APR 85

~~DECLASSIFIED
Department of State Guidelines, July 21, 1997
By MOJ NARA, Date 1/25/01~~

KEYWORDS: USIA GERMANY F R
EUROPE WEST MEDIA

SUBJECT: APR 29 & 30 RPTS ON PRES VISIT TO BITBURG - EUROPEAN ATTITUDES

ACTION: FOR RECORD PURPOSES DUE: STATUS C FILES WH

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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

CONFIDENTIAL ATTACHMENTS

INFORMATION

April 29, 1985

NOTED

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. McFARLANE

FROM: WALTER RAYMOND, JR. *WR*

SUBJECT: Foreign Press Comment on Bitburg

I am forwarding to you at Tab I the three most recent USIA compilations of foreign press reaction concerning Bitburg.

Attachment

Tab I Memos fr Wick, Apr 24, 25, 26, 1985

cc: Jim Rentschler
Ty Cobb
Jack Matlock

UNCLASSIFIED UPON REMOVAL OF
CLASSIFIED ENCLOSURE(S)

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CONFIDENTIAL ATTACHMENTS

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MEDIA REACTION REPORT FROM THE FRG

April 22, 1984:

The independent/liberal Stuttgarter Zeitung said in an editorial:

"Some of the President's closest aids consider his decision to visit the Bitburg military cemetery the biggest mistake he has made in his presidency...The German allies cannot be interested in seeing the view prevail in the U.S. that Reagan will go to Bitburg to do them a favor....The best thing the host can do now is to keep silent." (by Wilfried Muenster)

The pro-CDU Bonner Rundschau said:

"American veteran organizations are agitating as if the FRG should not have been considered a faithful and reliable ally of the U.S. for 40 years. Jewish organizations are protesting as intensely as if nothing had changed in Germany since 1945.....The FRG is not demanding too much in insisting on a new beginning."

The left-of-center Frankfurter Rundschau commented as follows on CDU/CSU floor leader Alfred Dregger's letter to U.S. senators:

"His letter reflects the line of thinking of people who refuse to accept the consequences of the crimes committed by Hitler....Ever since the end of World War II incorrigible rightists have kept entangling themselves in the simple rules of cause and effect."

April 23, 1984:

The conservative Die Welt of Bonn said in its front-page editorial from Washington:

"There is growing pressure in the U.S. on Chancellor Kohl to help President Reagan get out of a difficult situation by dropping the plan to visit the military cemetery at Bitburg....The most prominent supporter of calls for dropping the plan is Senate majority leader Robert Dole."

MEDIA REACTION FROM THE FRG -- April 23, 1985

* * * * *

BITBURG ISSUE--Although comment on the President's plan to go to the West German war cemetery lessened in volume internationally, media reported growing pressure to drop the visit. Headlines suggested Chancellor Kohl should show Mr. Reagan a way out.

BRITAIN: "White House Follies Dent Reagan Image"

Headlines in London today were "White House Follies Dent Image of the Great Communicator" (Times), "Holocaust Survivors Round on Reagan...Europe Remembers" (Daily Telegraph) and "Dismay in Bonn Over Criticism of Reagan Visit" (Financial Times).

"Reagan Has Always Been Sensitive to Anti-Semitism"

The independent Times' Washington correspondent Nicholas Ashford wrote: "The sad paradox of the mess over the Bitburg visit is that President Reagan has been impaled by an issue on which he has traditionally demonstrated understanding and commitment. He has always been sensitive to anti-Semitism and the horrors of the holocaust.

"Yet he is now seen as someone who is prepared callously to turn his back on that horrific episode for the political expedient of currying favor with a major European ally..."

"Diplomats Watch Helplessly as Prospects Worsen"

The conservative Daily Telegraph's Washington correspondent David Shears wrote that "American and West German diplomats in Washington watched helplessly as the prospects for President Reagan's impending state visit to West Germany worsened with all the inevitability of a Greek tragedy..."

USIA/P/M

"American and German commentators are in wide agreement that Chancellor Kohl and Mr. Reagan have contrived through insensitivity and bungling to spoil a visit that both leaders wanted to stage a festival of reconciliation..."

WEST GERMANY: "Republican for Alternative to Bitburg"

Headlines today in West Germany included "Reagan Visit to Ploetzensee Suggested--American Pressure on President Now Aimed at Chancellor Kohl" (Die Welt), "Kohl Expected to Show Reagan Way out--Republican for Alternative to Bitburg" (Frankfurter Rundschau) and "Bitburg Continues to Make Life Hard for Reagan" (Neue Ruhr Zeitung).

"Key Now Lies in Kohl's Hands"

Conservative Die Welt of Bonn ran a front-page report from Washington that "there is growing pressure in the United States on Chancellor Kohl to help President Reagan get out of a difficult situation by dropping the plan to visit the military cemetery at Bitburg..."

"The most prominent supporter of calls for dropping that plan is Senate majority leader Robert Dole.

"Elie Wiesel, chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, suggested as an alternative a visit to Ploetzensee prison... 'The key now lies in the hand of Chancellor Kohl,' Wiesel said."

"German Police Knock Down U.S. War Vets, Former Inmates?"

Liberal Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich said in a report from Washington: "The drama of Bitburg is about to become dangerous for all its participants. The damage already inflicted on German-American relations is immeasurable..."

"If Reagan's visit (to Bitburg) comes off according to its tactless plan, German police will have to be prepared to knock down protesting American war veterans and former concentration camp inmates who intend to block his road.

"Hope that public protests against Reagan's itinerary will die down if the President and his German hosts remain unyielding amounts to dangerously misassessing the situation in America."

FRANCE: "Determined to Continue on Wrong Path"

Influential Le Monde editorialized today: "The formidable awkwardness displayed by Mr. Reagan and his advisers in the commemoration affair is only the most recent gaffe by a President who has made many blunders. What is new is that none had yet gone so far as to mix up Germany's refusal of collective and eternal responsibility with obliviousness to and absolution of Nazi crimes..."

"Such disengagement is amazing and especially shocking to veterans associations, Jewish organizations and a large part of the press, because the White House seems determined to continue on the wrong path..."

SOUTH AFRICA: "It's Not Quite You, Mr. President"

Today's Johannesburg Star ran a cartoon depicting President Reagan wearing a German army helmet and looking into a mirror as an aide said, "Frankly, Mr. President, it's not quite you."

A small figure next to the President's desk holds a sign reading, "Heil to the Chief."

MEDIA REACTION FROM THE FRG -- April 24, 1985

* * * * *

BITBURG VISIT--Coverage of the scheduled wreath-laying was sharply reduced today, appearing mainly in West Germany--where opinion, for and against the visit, was divided.

WEST GERMANY: "Regrettable and Unfortunate"

Independent General-Anzeiger of Bonn noted that "there is continuing criticism in the United States and in West Germany of President Reagan's planned visit to the Bitburg military cemetery....Bonn Government spokesman Peter Boenisch said the FRG government will adhere to this plan...

"White House spokesman Larry Speakes said President Reagan will try during his visit to straighten out the regrettable and unfortunate misunderstandings about the itinerary."

"Kohl Should Help Reagan Out of Dilemma"

Mass-circulation, conservative Bild Zeitung carried an interview with Bundestag Deputy Hildegard Hamm-Bruecher (FDP) who said, "Chancellor Kohl should show political instinct and help President Reagan out of the dilemma.

"In order to avert further damage to German-American relations and to the Federal Republic's prestige abroad, the best thing the Bonn Government could do is to propose a different program for the visit. Kohl and Reagan could, for instance, visit a memorial for the German resistance fighters."

"Drop Bitburg"

Pro-CDU Frankfurter Neue Presse urged that "Kohl and Reagan should drop Bitburg from the itinerary."

"He Has to Go Through With It"

Independent Westdeutsche Allgemeine of Essen held that "Reagan obviously cannot revise his itinerary without exposing himself to charges of weakness. He has to go through with it and make the best of it."



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

April 25, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Robert C. McFarlane
Assistant to the President
For National Security Affairs

FROM: D - Charles Z. Wick *ew*

SUBJECT: European Attitudes and Foreign Media
Reaction to the planned Bitburg Visit

My European Area Director has just given me the following up-date on European attitudes towards the President's planned visit to the military cemetery in Bitburg. I believe this should be brought to your personal attention.

Additionally, attached is a special report of foreign media reaction to the planned Bitburg visit which you also may find of interest.

DECLASSIFIED
Department of State Guidelines, July 21, 1997
By *msn* NARA, Date *1/25/01*

~~DECLASSIFIED
White House Guidelines, August 23, 1997
By *msn* NARA, Date *1/25/01*~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CLASSIFIED BY: CHARLES Z. WICK
DECLASSIFY ON: OADR

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

April 25, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR : The Director
FROM : EU - John F. Kordek
SUBJECT : An Up-Date on European Attitudes toward the President's Visits to Bitburg and Bergen-Belsen

SUMMARY

European media today continue to play off American media reports criticizing the decision to go ahead with the Bitburg visit. Outside of Germany, public attitudes East and West oppose the symbolism of Bitburg.

WESTERN EUROPE

In France, continuing media interest is drawing public attention to the SS dead among the buried at Bitburg. The French view Bitburg as a very different sort of reconciliation with Germany's past than what Mitterand and Chancellor Kohl did at Verdun.

Press play in the FRG shows regret verging on self-pity for what the negative publicity is doing to Germany's image. Embassy officers have encountered latent antisemitic tendencies in the comments of some individual Germans, who have implied that the controversy is being fanned in the US by the Jewish eastern establishment.

Public opinion in the Benelux countries, Denmark and Norway, all occupied by the Germans in World War II, sympathizes with President Reagan's motive of reconciliation, but believe Bitburg to be an unacceptable symbol of that reconciliation.

In the UK, the White House's decision to visit Bitburg is diminishing confidence in the President's leadership. Citing former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt as its source, the UK's BBC World Service news reported this morning that the SS men buried at Bitburg belonged to a unit that had massacred American prisoners during the Battle of the Bulge.

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CLASSIFIED BY: JOHN F. KORDEK
DECLASSIFY ON: OADR

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EASTERN EUROPE

Private and official reaction in Yugoslavia and Poland to the Bitburg visit has been very, very negative. Usually pro-Western Yugoslavs cannot understand what they term the President's "insensitivity" to the European victims of Nazism. There has been little media treatment of Bitburg in the Yugoslav press so far. However, the Yugoslav media is expected to increase its coverage as the controversy becomes more active.

Poles, as well as the Polish Government, are outraged by the President's plans. In a break with the traditional popular distrust of communist news organs, it appears that the Poles agree with the official media's treatment of the issue. In effect, the Bitburg visit succeeds in doing to President Reagan what the Jaruzelski regime has failed to do over the past two years: turn the Polish people against the President. The official media is having a field day, quoting the ABC/Washington Post poll showing the majority of Americans opposed to the visit. US Embassy Warsaw reports this morning that Mark Edelman, former Deputy Commander in Warsaw's 1944 Jewish Ghetto Uprising (and now a Solidarity activist), has distributed copies to resident Western correspondents of a personal appeal to President Reagan not to visit the Bitburg cemetery.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

SPECIAL REPORT

Foreign Media Reaction

United States Information Agency

April 25, 1985

PRELUDE TO BONN ECONOMIC SUMMIT: BITBURG CONTROVERSY

Summary

President Reagan's plan to visit and lay a wreath at the West German World War II cemetery at Bitburg on May 5 held world media attention over the last ten days, with maximum intensity of coverage and comment occurring from April 15-22.

Foreign media noted the outcry against the visit in the United States from various quarters, and most writers agreed with London's Daily Telegraph that the planned Bitburg stop was "a public relations fiasco."

In wide-ranging criticism, Le Monde of Paris decried "the formidable awkwardness displayed by Mr. Reagan and his advisers," Australia's Sydney Morning Herald judged that "Reagan's image has been tarnished" and Tel Aviv's Haaretz termed the itinerary "a scandal of universal proportions."

Rome's La Repubblica predicted that "it is not going to be easy for the United States to come out safely from the dispute."

In West Germany, writers held mixed views. Some argued that he should "drop Bitburg from the itinerary" but others declared, "He has to go through with it."

Pro-Christian Democratic weekly Rheinischer Merkur of Bonn wrote: "The original intention behind this state visit has vanished....Something which was supposed to become a grand gesture is threatening to deteriorate into a grotesque event."

A few commentators believed--as did a London Times editor--that although Mr. Reagan's arrangements "were made with a notable absence of finesse, yet he deserves some sympathy in his predicament..."

Soviet media over this period were highly critical of Mr. Reagan's Bitburg visit, calling it his "bow to the 'Third Reich' and "a sacrilege by Washington that will not be erased."

EUROPE

BRITAIN

"Fury Grows Over War Graves"

Significant London headlines from April 15-25 were "Senate Leader Tells President Not to Go...White House Follies Dent Image of Great Communicator...Belsen Visit Fails to Silence Critics" (independent Times), "Fury Grows Over War Graves Visit...Dismay in Bonn Over Criticism of Reagan Visit...Reagan Rubs Raw Nerves in Europe" (Financial Times) and "A Stain on the White House" (independent Observer).

White House Denies Rumors of Change

Washington correspondent Reginald Dale wrote in the Financial Times of April 25: "While many of Mr. Reagan's senior advisers were showing increasing dismay over the damaging political fallout from the bungled arrangements for the visit, the White House yesterday denied that moves were under way to persuade West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to alter the venue for the planned gesture of U.S.-West German postwar reconciliation..."

Last-Minute Change Sought by Top Aides

The independent Times Washington correspondent Nicholas Ashford noted April 25 that "the President's top aides--his chief of staff, Mr. Donald Regan and Mr. Michael Deaver, the deputy chief of staff...now seem to think it best to have a last-minute change..."

"The Sad Paradox"

Washington Correspondent Nicholas Ashford observed in the Times of April 23 that "the sad paradox of the mess over the Bitburg visit is that President Reagan has been impaled by an issue on which he has traditionally demonstrated understanding and commitment. He has always been sensitive to anti-Semitism and the horrors of the Holocaust..."

"Bungled Festival of Reconciliation"

Correspondent David Shears wrote from Washington in the conservative Daily Telegraph April 23: "American and West German diplomats in Washington watched helplessly as the prospects for President Reagan's impending state visit to West Germany worsened with all the inevitability of a Greek tragedy..."

"American and German commentators are in wide agreement that Chancellor Kohl and Mr. Reagan have contrived through insensitivity and bungling to spoil a visit that both leaders wanted to stage as a festival of reconciliation..."

"A Shamefaced About-Turn"

On April 22, Times Washington correspondent Ashford called the White House decision for the President to visit Bergen-Belsen concentration camp a "shamefaced about-turn..."

"Difficult Issue"

Washington correspondent for the liberal Guardian, Alex Brummer, reported April 22: "The President's decision to visit the Bitburg cemetery and his latest clumsy remarks, in which he equated German soldiers with the victims of the Holocaust, is proving one of the most difficult issues for the White House to handle since Mr. Reagan assumed the Presidency..."

"Unleashed a New Wave of Jewish Fury"

A Washington correspondent story of April 22 in the Financial Times related that "the President has inadvertently unleashed a new wave of Jewish fury...by claiming that German soldiers buried at Bitburg were 'victims' of the Nazis 'just as surely as the victims in concentration camps.'..."

"Each time he opens his mouth, he makes it worse," said one Jewish leader yesterday..."

"He Deserves Some Sympathy"

A Times editorial of April 19 maintained that although the President's arrangements "were made with a notable absence of finesse, yet he deserves some sympathy in his predicament..."

The paper considered that there were "two currents of feeling" and that "both are generous in impulse, both command respect."

"One finds cause for celebration in the liberation of Europe and the transformation of German polity....The other insists that the crimes of Nazi-dominated Germany shall never be forgotten..."

"It is no wonder if the President has failed to hit upon a symbolism for his public arrangements that does justice to both emphases in the judgment of all."

"Has the 'Great Communicator' Lost His Magic Touch?"

Correspondent Reginald Dale asserted in the April 19 Daily Telegraph that the trip was "fast deteriorating into a public relations fiasco from which Mr. Reagan will need all his instinctive political skills to extricate himself..."

"American media are asking whether he has not finally lost his magic touch as 'the great communicator.'"

FRANCE

"Reagan's Unfortunate Week"

These were typical Parisian headlines during the past ten days "Reagan: Zero in History" (left-of-center Liberation), "Reagan's Unfortunate Week" (conservative Figaro), "Bitburg: The Shameful Visit" (Communist Humanite), "A Polemic Which Embarrasses Reagan" (independent Quotidien) and "Reagan's Blunders" (pro-Socialist Le Matin).

European Parliament Denounced Reagan's Double Visit

Communist Humanite said April 25, "In Strasbourg, a group of 36 members of the European Parliament denounced in a written declaration the double visit of Reagan (to Bitburg and Bergen-Belsen) which seems 'to associate victims and torturers.'..."

"White House Seems Determined to Continue on Wrong Path"

Influential Le Monde on April 24 spoke of "the formidable awkwardness displayed by Mr. Reagan and his advisers" and added: "None had yet gone so far as to mix up Germany's refusal of collective and eternal responsibility with obliviousness to and absolution of Nazi crimes..."

"Such disengagement is amazing and especially shocking to veterans associations, Jewish organizations and a large part of the press, because the White House seems determined to continue on the wrong path..."

"Ronald Reagan Went Through a 'Dark' Week"

Pro-Socialist Le Matin April 22 ran this account by a special (AFP) correspondent in Bitburg: "Luck deserted Ronald Reagan. He went through a 'dark' week following a series of widely noticed 'gaffes' and 'faux-pas.'"

"Huge Indignation"

Communist Humanite wrote April 22, "This way of putting Nazi victims and their torturers on the same footing provokes huge indignation."

"Bogged Down in the Minefield of Historical References"

Left-of-center Liberation noted in an April 22 media round-up, "The dark past of Germany is too complicated for the U.S. President....He made a number of blunders and got bogged down in the minefield of historical references..."

"How Can One Not Be Shocked?"

A front-page editorial April 18 in influential Le Monde asked, "How can one not be shocked by the hesitations showing regrettable moral confusion in an area that is still very sensitive?"

"After refusing to visit Dachau and after agreeing to lay a wreath at a German war cemetery, President Reagan finally decided to 'balance' the visit with an homage to victims of Nazi terror..."

Correspondent Faults Deaver

A Bonn correspondent commented April 17 in pro-Socialist Le Matin, "Everything started in February with the arrival in West Germany of a U.S. delegation led by Michael Deaver.... It's clearly a lack of culture and of a sense of history--or of political sensitivity--which is to blame for the mistake of the public relations genius, Michael Deaver..."

WEST GERMANY

"Reagan 'Shocked' by Reaction"

Typical headlines included "Reagan 'Shocked' by Reaction... U.S. President Reexamines Plan to Visit Bitburg" (pro-Social Democratic Frankfurter Rundschau), "Reagan Promise Also to Visit Concentration Camp Cannot Soothe Waves in U.S." (pro-Christian Democratic Rheinische Post of Duesseldorf) and "Reagan Causes New Protests in U.S...Indignation at Comparison of Victims of Nazi Terror to Dead Soldiers (left-of-center Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger of Cologne).

"Americans Haven't Yet Overcome Anti-German Feelings"

Conservative Die Welt of Bonn on April 25 said, "Irritation and partial blindness for historical facts have given rise to the misunderstanding that the debate on President Reagan's planned visit to Bitburg indicates that the Americans have not yet overcome their anti-German feelings."

"Reagan Should Adhere to His Intention"

Conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine on April 25 wrote, "In spite of growing pressure in America, President Reagan should adhere to his intention to visit the German military cemetery at Bitburg..."

"U.S., German Officers Lay Wreath There Every Year"

Pro-Social Democratic Neue Ruhr Zeitung of Essen on April 25 said, "A dam of feelings seems to have broken (in the United States). No one points out that, in the past 25 years, an American and a German officer have jointly laid down a wreath at the Bitburg military cemetery on Memorial Day every year."

"A Disaster Which Cannot Be Covered Up Anymore"

Liberal Mannheimer Morgen wrote on April 25 that "no matter who is responsible for it, the whole thing has turned into a disaster which cannot be covered up anymore."

"Drop Bitburg From the Itinerary"

Pro-CDU Frankfurter Neue Presse on April 24 urged that "Kohl and Reagan should drop Bitburg from the itinerary."

"He Has to Go Through With It"

Independent Westdeutsche Allgemeine of Essen on April 24 held that "Reagan obviously cannot revise his itinerary without exposing himself to charges of weakness. He has to go through with it and make the best of it."

"German Police Knock Down U.S. War Vets, Former Inmates?"

Liberal Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich said in a Washington report on April 23: "If Reagan's visit (to Bitburg) comes off according to its tactless plan, German police will have to be prepared to knock down protesting American war veterans and former concentration camp inmates who intend to block his road."

"Bitburg a Paralyzing Issue for the President"

West German TV One's Washington correspondent Fritz Pleitgen said on April 22: "It must be bitter...that the protesters (outside the White House) link the tensions in Central America to Reagan's FRG visit. Bitburg becomes a paralyzing issue for the President."

"Much Will Depend on Reagan's Performance in Europe"

Conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine said in an April 22 report from Washington: "Much will depend on Reagan's performance in Europe..."

"We Have to Be Concerned"

Reporting on commemoration of the liberation of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, Bonn's independent General-Anzeiger on April 22 commented: "We have to be concerned when a prominent Israeli personality (Elie Wiesel) equates Ronald Reagan's intention to visit Bitburg with a 'victory of the Nazis' and a dishonoring of the memory of the Jewish victims of Nazism..."

"The Protest Is Not Over"

Erhard Thomas reported April 20 from Washington for TV One: "The protest against Reagan's decision to visit Bitburg is not over....The White House is still uncertain on how to regain lost ground."

"Original Intention Has Vanished"

Pro-Christian Democratic weekly Rheinischer Merkur of Bonn, out April 19, wrote: "Even now, the original intention behind this state visit has vanished....Something which was supposed to become a grand gesture is threatening to deteriorate into a grotesque event."

"The President Should Be Saved From Hollow Gestures"

Pro-Social Democratic Neue Ruhr Zeitung of Essen on April 19 said: "It is high time that the U.S. President be saved from making any gestures which might come across as nothing but hollow ceremonies designed for the television screen."

"Are Germans Now Friends or Still 'Old Nazis?'"

Conservative Die Welt of Bonn on April 18 asked, "Are the Germans now friends and allies of America or still 'old Nazis' with limited rights? Such questions have been heard in Bonn in reaction to efforts by Washington to cancel the planned...ceremony at...Bitburg..."

"The Degrading Back and Forth Goes on"

Right-of-center Stuttgarter Nachrichten on April 17 said, "The degrading back and forth goes on....The remembrance of this special date is inconsistent with the recent thoughtlessness of Bonn and Washington..."

"President's Visit to FRG Is Embarrassing"

Left-of-center Frankfurter Rundschau on April 16 wrote, "The program for the U.S. President's visit to the FRG is embarrassing--as embarrassing as a theater performance of untalented amateur actors..."

"Program Planning Not a Masterpiece of U.S. Diplomacy"

Right-of-center Stuttgarter Nachrichten commented on April 16: "The planning of the program for President Reagan's state visit to the FRG is no masterpiece of U.S. diplomacy..."

WEST BERLIN

"Dispute Over Reagan Visit Is Embarrassing"

Representative headlines were "U.S. Senate Majority Opposed to Reagan Visit to War Cemetery" (independent Tagesspiegel), "Dispute Over Reagan Visit Is Embarrassing" (pro-Social Democratic Volksblatt Berlin) and "Soviets See the U.S. in the Footsteps of Ghengis Khan" (conservative Berliner Morgenpost).

U.S. Senate Vote

The press highlighted April 24 a U.S. Senate vote turning down a move which demanded that President Reagan abandon his plans of visiting the Bitburg war cemetery.

"Politicians Should Dampen Emotions"

Conservative Berliner Morgenpost April 23 commented: "Given all the errors and excitement in view of President Reagan's West Germany visit, every responsible politician should have the goal of dampening emotions and preventing U.S.-German relations from being damaged."

"Dispute Over Reagan Visit Is Embarrassing"

Under the above headline April 19, pro-Social Democratic Volksblatt Berlin carried a statement by the chairman of West Berlin's Jewish community asserting that "more sensitivity on both sides--the German and the American--is necessary."

"A Cleverly Prepared Propaganda Action by the East"

Independent, conservative Berliner Morgenpost April 17 declared, "A cleverly prepared propaganda action by the East has forced us into a discussion of the question whether to commemorate the event as a day of liberation or as a day of mourning..."

"Moscow and East Berlin are pleased at how Bonn's representatives...are fighting with each other..."

"The Damage Is Done"

Pro-Social Democratic Volksblatt Berlin asked April 16, "How can one...explain such a mess? The constant zigzagging raises the possibility of a Bitburg visit being balanced by one to Dachau."

"The damage is done, and it will take quite an effort to mend it..."

"A Slightly Bad Taste"

Tabloid B.Z. April 15 commented: "The change of the intended visit (from a concentration camp to Bitburg war cemetery) has a slightly bad taste..."

"Inconceivable How Good Intention Can Be 'Embarrassing'"

Independent, conservative Berliner Morgenpost April 14 ran this commentary: "President Reagan, who sees his visit to the Rhine as a sign of reconciliation among former enemies...wants to honor the German war dead...at Bitburg.

"It is simply inconceivable how this intention can be referred to as 'embarrassing and irritating.'..."

ITALY

"The White House's Gaffe"

Representative headlines over the period were "Reagan in Germany: Naivetes and Mistakes (independent, centrist Il Mattino, Naples), "The White House's Gaffe Unleashes the Jewish Lobby" (conservative Il Resto del Carlino, Bologna) and "Reagan's Program for His Visit to Germany Irritates Bonn and the Jews" (left-of-center La Repubblica, Rome).

"U.S. President Risks Making Everybody Unhappy"

A Bonn correspondent judged in leftist La Repubblica April 21 under the above headline: "On the two sides of the Atlantic we have two characters who are both notable for their lack of a sense of history.

"The fecklessness of Reagan, who did not even understand why Kohl's seemingly good suggestion to celebrate reconciliation in a cemetery suddenly turned bad. And Kohl's heavier, German roughness..."

"Reagan's Visit Reopens Old Wounds"

Centrist Corriere della Sera of Milan April 18 ran a Bonn correspondent's report under the headline "Reagan's Visit Reopens Old Wounds...Continual Changes to Program Ended up Making Everybody Unhappy."

It said: "The disputes of the last few days have left a bitter taste in the mouth. Reagan's visit, which was to strengthen the U.S.-German friendship, demonstrated instead how frail it is and how the old wounds are still hurting..."

"Reagan Exposed Self to Accusations of Insensitivity"

New York correspondent Enrico Franceschini wrote in Rome's La Repubblica April 17: "For the United States it is not going to be easy to come out safely from the dispute on the Bitburg cemetery.

"Several U.S. commentators have remarked that a political expert like Reagan exposed himself to accusations of being insensitive on such a clear and old issue as Nazism..."

OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

NETHERLANDS

The Difference Between "Victims"

Socialist Volkskrant of Amsterdam declared April 22 in a comment on the President's statement of April 18 that German soldiers buried at Bitburg were "victims" of the Nazis "just as surely as the victims in the concentration camps:" It is extremely stupid and insulting to equate the German war dead with the millions who died in the Nazi gas chambers.

"If the 'common' German soldier was a relatively powerless cog in the Nazi wheel, it was he and many of his fellow countrymen who gave Hitler...the means for the armed subjugation of Europe and for carrying out their murderous plans..."

"The victims of the death camps were defenseless citizens, slaughtered solely because there were Jews, gypsies or whoever did not comply with Aryan notions of purity..."

AUSTRIA

A Need to Forget the Past

Independent Die Presse of Vienna commented April 19 that "World War II has left some ulcerous wounds. Although the Americans won the war, seemingly, they cannot forget that the Wehrmacht caused them great trouble in the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944..."

"Alliance is good, friendship is okay and they need the German partner today. But sometimes the impression prevails that the scope of American politicians isn't broad enough ...for them to reach out sufficiently to forget the past..."

SOVIET UNION

"Paying Tribute to Dead Criminals"

Moscow radio in English to North America on April 18 ran a commentator's statement that "White House spokesman Larry Speakes said the other day that the President's trip to Federal Germany is in the spirit of reconciliation.

"The question arises, however, what sort of reconciliation Washington means by laying a wreath at the graves of those who committed acts of aggression, atrocities and killed prisoners of war..."

"To observe the coming 40th anniversary of VE Day by paying tribute to dead criminals--as Washington plans--is a challenge to the conscience of humanity and to the memory of those who lost their lives in the battle against the Nazi aggressors."

"Manipulating Conscience"

In a Pravda article titled as above and disseminated by Moscow TASS on April 17, the writer concluded: "There may be other changes in the itinerary, but the sacrilege committed by Washington will not be erased. Many things can be manipulated, but not memory of millions of people killed by the Nazis."

"Reagan's Bow to the 'Third Reich'"

Moscow TASS quoted Pravda of April 14 as saying that "in the White House, they do not want to 'evoke memories of the past' and prefer instead to stage this act of blasphemy. Reagan's bow to the 'Third Reich' cannot be seen as anything else but a mockery of the memory of the millions of people who died at the Nazis' hands."

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

JAPAN

"Plans to Emphasize U.S.-FRG Cooperation Upset"

Tokyo's moderate Yomiuri on April 19 carried this report from a Bonn correspondent: "There is...strong criticism from Jewish organizations and war veterans on the planned visit to the (Bitburg) cemetery.

"The controversy has upset U.S. and West German plans to emphasize firm cooperation between the two countries in the international economy and world strategy sectors by banishing World War II into the past."

HONG KONG

"An Act Which Reopens Old Wounds"

The pro-PRC Center Daily News said April 21 that President Reagan's decision to visit Bitburg was "an act which reopens old wounds....It has become the most awful and damaging failure since Reagan took over the White House."

AUSTRALIA

"Reagan's Image...Tarnished"

The April 23 independent Sydney Morning Herald declared, "The President's image as the 'world's nice guy' has also been tarnished, however unfairly, by his association with Nazism."

MIDDLE EAST

ISRAEL

"Distortion of History and a Seering Insult"

Israeli headlines during this period included "Distortion of History and a Seering Insult" (independent Haarétz) and "Blasphemy" (independent Yediot Aharanot).

"Scandal of Universal Proportions"

Independent Haaretz editorialized April 22, "President Reagan distorts history by claiming that German soldiers killed in World War II are to be absolved of any guilt. His attempt to equate them with the millions of Jews, gypsies and Russians who were systematically humiliated and murdered in extermination and prison camps is a scandal of universal proportions."

"Shatters the West's Code of Ethics and Justice"

An April 22 editorial in independent Maariv argued, "President Reagan's questionable premise, which he uses to justify his decision to visit Bitburg, shatters the West's code of ethics and justice."

"Trying to Equate the Unequatable"

Independent Maariv's chief editor wrote April 19 that if Mr. Reagan supplements a visit to the Bitburg cemetery with a tour of a Nazi concentration camp, he would be "adding insult to injury. The President is trying to equate the unequatable."

"We Should Let Him Do It"

The April 18 independent Jerusalem Post carried a writer's opinion that "we should desist from urging President Reagan to visit Dachau....He wants on the 40th anniversary of World War II to tighten bonds of friendship within the democratic alliance. He wants to refrain from pointing the finger of scorn this time..."

"We should let him do it."

"We Cannot Remain Silent"

Independent Haaretz remarked April 16, "The Jewish people do appreciate the efforts of the United States, which together with the Allied forces assured the defeat of Nazi Germany.

"Still, we cannot remain silent when an American President seeks to...absolve the German people of the sin of having followed the Nazi tyrants and of having brought calamity on the world. We expect Ronald Reagan...not to turn his back on the victims of Nazism."

JORDAN

"Zionist Blackmail"

In an April 21 press roundup, independent ad-Dustur of Amman described the President's decision to visit Bergen-Belsen as "submission to Zionist blackmail."

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

"It's Not Quite You, Mr. President"

The April 24 independent Johannesburg Star ran a cartoon depicting President Reagan wearing a German army helmet and looking into a mirror as an aide said, "Frankly, Mr. President, it's not quite you."



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

April 26, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Robert C. McFarlane
Assistant to the President
For National Security Affairs
The White House

FROM : D - Charles Z. Wick *CW*

SUBJECT : Up-Date on European Attitudes toward the
President's Visit to Bitburg.

REFERENCE : My April 25 Memorandum to you on the same
subject.

Attached is today's up-date report on European attitudes toward the President's planned visit to the military cemetery in Bitburg.

DECLASSIFIED
Department of State Guidelines, July 21, 1997
By 1271 NARA, Date 1/25/01

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CLASSIFIED BY: CHARLES Z. WICK
DECLASSIFY ON: OADR

05 APR 26 08:40

UNCLASSIFIED DATE 08/01/2013 BY 60322

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THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE MATTER CONCERNING THE ...

SUBJECT : [REDACTED]
 REFERENCE : [REDACTED]
 ACTION : [REDACTED]
 COMMENTS : [REDACTED]

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

April 26, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

FROM: EU - John F. Kordek

SUBJECT: Today's Up-Date on European Attitudes toward the President's Visits to Bitburg and Bergen-Belsen

SUMMARY

Concern that the Bitburg controversy is damaging the President's image as a national leader and as the leader of the NATO Alliance continues in Europe today outside of Germany.

WESTERN EUROPE

At NATO Headquarters in Brussels, colleagues from other alliance countries are for the most part maintaining an embarrassed silence on the Bitburg controversy. However, several have come forward privately to say that attempting to use Bitburg to express reconciliation with Germany's role in World War II is not going to work. As the controversy continues, they see damage being done not only to President Reagan and to Chancellor Kohl, but to the NATO Alliance as well.

Brussels reports that public opinion in Luxembourg, scene of much of the fighting during the Battle of the Bulge, vociferously opposes the President honoring a site where SS troops are buried. Brussels also reports that the President of the Francophone Social Christian Party, a member of Belgium's ruling coalition, has sent a letter to President Reagan asking him to reconsider his visit to Bitburg. The writer, Gerard Deprez, is from Bastogne.

In France, which has the fourth largest Jewish population in the world, and where Nazi SS officer Klaus Barbie is still in jail (in Lyons) awaiting trial for his crimes, the Bitburg controversy continues to grow, with most French dailies giving wide play today to the ABC/Washington Post poll showing a majority of Americans opposed to the Bitburg visit.

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CN, NARA, DATE 6/19/06

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Bonn reports that although most Germans would like to see President Reagan honor German war dead, a political storm that crosses political lines is raging in the FRG over Kohl's handling of the situation. On the dark side, today's German edition of the mass circulation Quick magazine blames opposition to the cemetery visit on "the influence of Jews" and the "power of the big media" in the US.

In neutral Austria the Bitburg controversy has been displaced by reports that the US Embassy in Vienna has withdrawn from two V-E Day commemorative events hosted by the Soviets because of the recent Nicholson Affair. The inference that Americans will go to Bitburg, but not socialize with its wartime Soviet ally has been drawn privately.

Eastern Europe

Individual reaction among Poles continues to be one of amazement bordering on incomprehension. Our PAO reports that at lunch yesterday a contact (not Jewish) who was in a Nazi concentration camp during the war said that, " It is incomprehensible that President Reagan could be either so naive or insensitive to the feelings of many, many Europeans." Another Pole present added, " Someone within the Administration is deliberately trying to sabotage Reagan. This is the only way to explain such a stupid blunder."

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

National Security Council
The White House

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System # I

Package # 3388



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Bob Pearson	<u>1</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>I</u>
Bob Kimmitt	<u>2</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>I</u>
John Poindexter			
Paul Thompson			
Wilma Hall	<u>B</u>		
Bud McFarlane	<u>4</u>	<u>has advance copy.</u>	<u>I</u>
Bob Kimmitt			
NSC Secretariat	<u>6</u>		<u>N</u>
Situation Room			

I = Information A = Action R = Retain D = Dispatch N = No further Action

cc: VP Meese Regan Deaver Other _____

COMMENTS Should be seen by: _____
(Date/Time)

JT

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TO MCFARLANE

FROM WICK, C

DOCDATE 24 APR 85

WICK, C

25 APR 85

WICK, C

26 APR 85

KEYWORDS: USIA

GERMANY F R

EUROPE WEST

MEDIA

SUBJECT: EUROPEAN ATTITUDES & FORN MEDIA REACTION TO BITBURG VISIT

ACTION: ANY ACTION NECESSARY

DUE: 29 APR 85 STATUS S FILES WH

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RAYMOND

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COMMENTS

*Send copy to M. Mahley for his reading
cc - Kentschke, L. L.*

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Raymond	S 4/27	Any Action Necessary		
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DOC DATE 25 APR 85

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COMMENTS

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