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Germany pursues Rudolf extradition

By Chris Hastings and Jessica Berry

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A FUGITIVE from justice and traced to Britain by The Telegraph is now facing the threat of extradition.

Senior officials at the German Embassy in London have confirmed that moves are underway to have Germar Rudolf returned to Germany. Rudolf fled his home in Stuttgart in 1995 after he was sentenced to 14 months in prison for inciting racial hatred. He was convicted of breaching Germany's Holocaust denial laws after he published a report that denied the use of gas chambers at Auschwitz.

He fled the country before his jail sentence was due to begin and escaped to Spain where he stayed with Otto Ernst Remer, a former Nazi general and friend of Adolf Hitler. German police lost track of him after he left Spain in the summer of 1996, but an investigation by The Telegraph traced him to a series of houses in south-east England - in Hastings, Tunbridge Wells, Pevensey Bay and Hove.

Rudolf, who has been highly critical of the German government, had assumed he could not be extradited from Britain because Holocaust denial is not an offence in this country. But officials have confirmed they will seek his return on the grounds that incitement to racial hatred is a crime in both countries. A senior official at the embassy said: "It is now highly likely that we will be seeking the extradition of Mr Rudolf.

"Holocaust denial may not be a crime in Britain but incitement to racial hatred is. Mr Rudolf was found guilty of this offence. Now we know he is definitely in England we can proceed. If we do proceed we hope to have an application before the Home Office within the next few weeks." For any extradition attempt to proceed the case would have to be referred to Interpol by the prosecutor's office in Stuttgart. An international warrant would then be issued for Rudolf's arrest.

Rudolf has continued to work as a revisionist since he arrived in Britain. He has set up a publishing business and maintains an internet site, although he keeps his home address secret. Last month he visited the United States where he spoke at a conference on revisionism. The disclosure that Rudolf is likely to be extradited has been welcomed by MPs and Jewish groups.

Stephen Twigg, the chairman of the lobby group Labour Friends of Israel, said: "I welcome any action that would bring this man to justice." Mike Gates MP, the vice-chairman of The Council Against Anti-Semitism said: "This is excellent news. This country should not be used as a haven for people who have committed crimes abroad. It is wrong that people who have been inciting racial hatred in one country should be allowed to continue their work here."

A Home Office spokesman said: "We would never comment on the existence of a request." Andrew Dismore, the Labour MP for Hendon, has asked the Home Office to deport Rudolf.

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