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XAAZ-24188

7 April 1951

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Discussions with Mr. Lebed of ZPUNVR.

1. A meeting took place on 4 April 1951 attended by Mr. Nicolai Lebed, Head of The Foreign Representation of the Ukrainian Supreme Council of Liberation (ZPUNVR), and [redacted] of OPO, and OSO. The purpose of this meeting was to have [redacted] meet Lebed and give them an opportunity to form their own opinions of him. It was also thought that this was a good time at which to have [redacted] brought in as a higher level contact to discuss certain political questions which had been troubling Lebed.

2. Mr. Lebed had previously posed two questions which he wished answers to:

a. Does the U.S. Government take a neutral attitude towards the efforts of ZPUNVR and its friends in the United States to publicize the activities of the Ukrainian resistance movement.

b. Does the U.S. Government take a neutral attitude towards the liberation struggle which the resistance movement is now carrying on in the Ukraine.

3. [redacted] stated that the U.S. Government has always adopted a policy of not interfering with the legitimate efforts of its citizens or of visitors to obtain publicity for activities or programs which they may be interested in. However [redacted] pointed out as a matter of friendly advice that if this propaganda took the form of direct attacks on the Government or Agencies of the Government, such as VOA, Mr. Lebed should not be surprised if the Government took some action to defend itself. [redacted] pointed out, however, that constructive criticism would not be interfered with.

4. In answer to the second question, [redacted] said that the U.S. Government definitely took a neutral attitude toward the struggle in the Ukraine and that the policy of the Government in regard to internal Russian issues such as this was not to make any firm commitments to any program or to any group, but rather to

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take the position that this is an issue which must be decided by the people themselves at such time as their will can be freely expressed. It was also pointed out that the fact that this meeting was being held and that covert support was being given to ZPUNVR and to the resistance movement in the Ukraine was a clear indication that the Government's policy was at least one of neutrality. There was considerable discussion along this line and it was clear that Mr. Lebed had some doubts as to just what the State Department's true policy really was on this issue.

5. Following this there was a long discussion of the VOA Ukrainian and Russian broadcasts, both of which Mr. Lebed claimed did not achieve their aim of keeping hope alive amongst the peoples of Russia and of further dividing them from their rulers. It was pointed out to Mr. Lebed that although constructive criticism of VOA was welcome, we could not agree with all he had to say about it. In addition, it was noted that the VOA broadcast has improved somewhat over the last year and that a continuous effort was being made to further improve them.

6. Finally, Mr. Lebed was told that he could not expect to have any great change in the VOA programs overnight, even if we should agree that this was desirable, and that he should not expect in the present situation any endorsement of the underground's ultimate political aim by the Government.

[ Chief, EE-4 ]

*JRN*  
EE-4, JRN:jga

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