

~~SECRET~~ SECRET

JUN 17 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief of Operations, DD/P

SUBJECT : Project AEROOT (Renewal)

1. The attached project originating in the SR Division is herewith presented for your approval for the period 1 March 1955 through 29 February 1956 with authorization to obligate  from the DD/P-SR Division budget for the current fiscal year and for the 1956 fiscal year, assuming that funds will then be available to carry the project through the remainder of the approval period.
2. There is attached a memorandum prepared by Plans Staff summarizing the important factors involved and stating the recommendations of the FI Staff.
3. I recommend approval of AEROOT as presented.

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2007

Chief  
Foreign Intelligence

Approved:  COP-DD/P

17 June '55  
Date

~~SECRET~~ SECRET ~~SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

16 June 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief of Foreign Intelligence

SUBJECT : Project AEROOT (Renewal)

1. PURPOSE: Through illegal infiltration of agents into Estonia, to establish resident nets capable of procuring operational and positive intelligence on priority targets within the area (see attachment for list of targets). The illegal agents will also recruit nuclei for the formation of unconventional warfare nets at the advent of a hot war situation.
2. PERSONNEL:
  - a. ACTIVE PERSONNEL:
    - (1) AEROOT/4, [redacted], [redacted], (formerly AERJONCLEUR/2 and AERIKER/2), is a 35 year old Estonian DP. He is in excellent physical condition. He has a speaking knowledge of eight languages. He is principally motivated by a desire to liberate his homeland but considers a satisfactory contract important as evidence of U.S. recognition of the risks he will take in our behalf. Agent fought with the Germans in WW II defending Estonian territory. When the Russians overran Estonia he escaped to Finland and joined the Finnish Navy. He was recruited by the Swedes in 1952 for infiltration into Estonia under the [redacted] [redacted] when this mission was cancelled, he was recruited by CIA and transferred to Germany. After a most favorable assessment he was then trained in the U.S. and dispatched on a black reconnaissance mission into the USSR. When this mission failed because of Norwegian U.S. lack of cooperation the agent was returned to the U.S. and transferred to AEROOT in December 1954. Agent has a 11qs. contract.

*Amended to reflect January 1990*

80001-C

~~TOP SECRET~~

TOP SECRET

(2) AEROOT/3 [ ] is a young Estonian who escaped to Sweden in November 1949. He held various jobs in Sweden until he signed on an Estonian ship under Swedish flag in 1951. In 1952 he jumped ship in Canada, where he worked as a forester. In 1953 he was deported back to Sweden. In July 1953 he was contacted and kept on stand-by until further notice by CIA's REDSOX recruiter in Sweden. He was brought to the U.S. under AEROOT in April 1955. He is principally motivated by the desire to help his friends and relatives escape from what he considers is a cruel Soviet regime in Estonia. He also anticipates rehabilitation in the U.S. and a bonus upon the completion of a successful mission. A contract covering him awaits approval of this project.

b. INACTIVE AND TRANSFERRED PERSONNEL:

- (1) AELUNG, AEMOTE, AEPALM, and AESKIP were all terminated or transferred in 1953. AELUNG and AEMOTE, as DOB instructors, are still used to instruct AEROOT agents.
- (2) AESTEM, a high-level P/A type with influential Estonian contacts in the U.S., was originally used as a U.S. spotter for AEROOT. Since recruitment of REDSOX agents in the U.S. is now restricted, AESTEM was transferred, in April 1955, to AEBASIN, a PF project.
- (3) AEROOT/1 after his dispatch into Estonia (see HISTORY below) was killed resisting the RES forces in the summer of 1954. Provision for payment of death benefits to his heirs is included in the project budget.
- (4) AEROOT/2 who was dispatched with AEROOT/1 is now before a Soviet Military Tribunal. Since his execution is almost certain, funds for payment of his salary until death and for payment of death benefits to his heirs have been included in the project budget.

3. FAST APPROVALS:

| <u>Action</u>       | <u>Officer</u>  | <u>Period</u>       | <u>Authorized</u> |
|---------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Extension (AEBASIN) | C/PI  | 1 Oct-52--28 Feb 53 | [ ]               |
| Extension (AEBASIN) | C/PI  | 1 Mar 53--31 May 53 |                   |
| Renewal (AEBASIN)   | DC/PI   | 1 Jun 53--28 Feb 54 |                   |
| Renewal (AEROOT)    | C/ops/DO/P  | 1 May 54--28 Feb 55 |                   |
| Amendment           | C/PI (to authorize [ ] write off on foreign currency) |                     |                   |

TOP SECRET

00001-C

TOP SECRET

4. HISTORY: Spotting and recruiting for the project which is now AEROOT was originally undertaken in Sweden under LCHOMELY. In 1952 when the agents so recruited declined to undertake their missions, it was decided that all future recruitment for these purposes would be conducted in the U.S. This search, however, was fruitless because of the many restrictions imposed and it was decided to reexplore the Estonian emigre pool in Sweden. In December 1952, the principal REDSOX agent in Stockholm initiated a plan, which eliminated the LCHOMELY mistakes, and was successful to the extent that five agents were recruited. AEROOT/1 and AEROOT/2 completed their training and were infiltrated by air into Estonia in early May 1954. As noted above, AEROOT/1 was killed and AEROOT/2 captured shortly after dispatch. AEROOT/2 was played back by the RIS as if clean but on 14 January 1955 his capture and turnover to the Military Tribunal was publicized. AEROOT/3 and AEROOT/4 are now on board. In November 1954, AEROOT/4 began Russian language training in the U.S. This was followed by an intensive area briefing. He will join AEROOT/3 in the training area about 1 August 1955 for long distance canoeing, swimming, balloon, and clandestine ops. training. It is expected that the agents will be infiltrated into Estonia in the early spring of 1956. The first choice for a method of infiltration will be balloon, the second canoe or other water craft. S/W or W/T systems will be set up for the agents' communications support. No communications support other than that already existing will be required.
5. EVALUATION: No intelligence reports have yet been produced by this project.
6. ACTION REQUESTED: Renewal for the period 1 March 1955 through 29 February 1956 with authorization to obligate   from the DD/P-SR Division.

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Freakdown: Compensation AEROOT/2 (4 months)    | \$1,400 |
| AEROOT/3                                       | 3,275   |
| AEROOT/4                                       | 3,275   |
| Travel for agents and C/Os                     | [ ]     |
| Purchase of information                        |         |
| Purchase of operational currency               |         |
| Death benefits for AEROOT/1 and 2              |         |
| Training expenses outside of agency facilities |         |
| Agents' medical and hospitalization expenses   |         |
| Purchase of supplies and equipment             |         |
| Entertainment and miscellaneous                |         |
| Support for agent personnel overseas           |         |

**TOP SECRET**

- Note: (1) Accounting by agent's receipts at the time of infiltration will constitute a write-off for foreign currency in the amount of \$14,000.
- (2) Agents will be paid \$480 per month, minus federal income tax while under contract. However, when the agents are undergoing training at CIA facilities with housing, food, and maintenance being provided, they will be paid \$150 a month plus federal income tax.

Commitments: Agents contracts cover all commitments except the promise to both agents to provide rehabilitation and permanent residence in the U.S. after the completion of their mission. The contracts include \$10,000 death benefits, \$5,000 bonus after the completion of their mission, and \$5,000 for hospitalization and medical expenses.

7. STAFF COMMENTS:

- a. FI/Ops stipulates that approval be subject to FI/Ops review of the specific operational plan when completed.
- b. CI/OA stipulates that approval be subject to that staff's receipt from the SR Division of a memorandum covering the following subjects: (1) An analysis of the reasons for the abortive drop of May 1954 and listing of measures to be taken to avoid recurrence of these in the 1956 drop. (2) An analysis of what CIA assets in Germany, Sweden, and elsewhere were compromised by AEROOT/2's capture. (3) An account of measures which have been taken to preserve the security of the project if it continues.
- c. RM/RE strongly recommends that the agent be thoroughly briefed for the purpose of guiding him in the selection of resident agents. That staff, with appropriate customer agencies, will determine the validity of the intelligence targets named in this project and apprise the case officer of the results in time for the agent briefing.
- d. FI/Plans/Projects requests that Air-Maritime Division concurrence, indicated by appropriate signatures, be included in the next renewal if it is still planned to use balloons for infiltration of the agents.

Concur, subject to  
above stipulations:

Chief/Plans  
Date

Staff Coordination:

C/FI/Ops/SOD -

For C/FI/Ops -

C/CI/OA -

AG/CI/Ops -

For C/FI/RM/RE -

Date MAY 19 1955

Review of Project AEROOT Area SR /Estonia (Hqts)/

1. Production

As this project has not been successful to date in establishing agents in the area of operations, no positive intelligence has been produced.

2. Requirements

During the next year this project will primarily be concerned with developing operational capabilities in Estonia and with the establishing of a communications system. Positive intelligence will be produced only as an adjunct to the primary effort. Targets on file are largely concentrated around the port city of Tallinn and include requests for information on the airport, for port details and for continuous reporting on troop and supply buildups. It is also anticipated that additional guidance for the collection of positive intelligence will be furnished after operational assets have been developed. This guidance can then be tailored to the capabilities which are known to exist.

3. Comments and Recommendations

a. In view of the possibility of the development of assets which could produce positive intelligence in Estonia and its contiguous area, it is recommended that this project be renewed.

b. It is strongly urged that the agent be thoroughly briefed for the purpose of guiding him in the selection of resident agents. RQM will review with appropriate customer agencies the intelligence targets described in paragraph 6 of the Project Outline to determine their validity as priority targets. The case officer will be apprised of this review sufficiently in advance of the agents departure to permit an up-to-date briefing.

   
Chief, FI/RQM/RE