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20-19120

5 April 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting With ACSI re Klaus ALTMANN aka BARBIE

1. At the request of OACSI, a meeting was held in FI/DCG offices to discuss ACSI's interest in Klaus BARBIE aka ALTMANN (SD 14614, 201-19126). Lt. Col. Gerd HABER and Capt. David G. WILSON represented USFSG, while Messrs [] and [] represented the FI Staff and WH Division respectively.

2. Col. HABER explained his desire to get an informal reading on the possibility of coordinating an operation involving ALTMANN and proceeded to supply additional background information which DIA had deleted from his original draft before forwarding it to CIA. Following a decision to exploit German ethnic groups in Latin America for intelligence purposes, which was apparently made in 1964, ACSI uncovered the ALTMANN case and asked the DAO in La Paz to conduct a discreet investigation to determine his whereabouts and occupation. The following information was obtained:

a. ALTMANN had become a naturalized Bolivian citizen in 1957;

b. He at one time had worked as a mechanic in La Paz while living at Calle Montevideo 126;

c. In March 1965, there was a carpenter shop in the upper Sopicachi area of La Paz, on Calle Pedro de la Gasca, across from #621, run by a man ALTMANN who was reported to travel frequently to Caranavi and Santa Cruz to buy lumber;

d. Also in the spring of 1965, there was a lumber yard in Santa Rosa run by a person of German origin named ALTMANN, and a man resembling photographs of Klaus ALTMANN was observed on the premises.

3. Other information disclosed by Col. HABER;

a. Through another agent in the German firm MEREX A.G., which ALTMANN represents in Bolivia, ACSI is able to

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obtain information unwittingly from ALTMANN.

b. In addition to his friendship with Hans RUDEL, ALTMANN maintains some kind of business connection with Otto SKORZENY, noted for his aerial exfiltration of Mussolini from Italy.

4. In reply to Col. HABER's request for an informal coordination view, Messrs. [] and [] made the following points:

a. The war criminal charges against ALTMANN require serious consideration, since exposure of CIC's role in evacuating him from Germany to avoid prosecution would have serious consequences for the U.S. Government; these would be still graver if a current operational relationship could be claimed (or demonstrated). It would also appear from Senator JAVITS' query in 1966 (Col. HABER was not sure whether this arose from a BEC or NBC television program) and the Augsburg police trace request of 1965 (see STUB 6969, IN 06467, 7 July 1965), that interest in prosecuting these charges is still very much alive in certain circles.

b. Consequently, ACSI would have to demonstrate ALTMANN's ability to supply unique information of significant importance under secure operational conditions before [] would be justified in coordinating any proposal.

c. We suggested that fuller exploitation of the existing channel to ALTMANN would serve to clarify his access to information, as well as provide assessment data, and thus help ACSI in deciding whether or not to submit a formal proposal.

d. We also suggested that, through their existing channels, they request a check of our Munich Liaison files under true and assumed names and all aliases to determine whether or not ALTMANN has come to their attention as a BND agent or contact.

5. It was agreed at the conclusion of the meeting that CIA would re-query [] for traces on ALTMANN's

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current business firms and his partner in Standard Industrial (Bolivia), Alfonso Fernandez de Luis G. (see original ACSI request). The generally negative reaction to recontacting ALTMANN without a clear understanding that the potential gain outweighed the manifest risks was understood and accepted by the ACSI officers.

[]

WH/FI

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