

JAN 20 1949

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

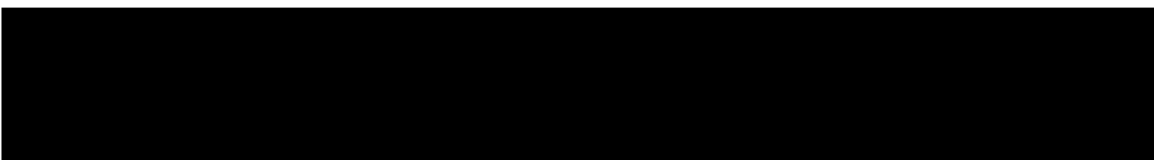
17 January 1949

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 78

SUBJECT: Soviet Penetration into the Fisheries of the West Coast of Latin America.

1. With regard to Soviet penetration into the fisheries of the West Coast of Mexico, this office has no knowledge of any Soviet-Mexican fishery negotiations such as those reported in the Merkel-Loker correspondence.
2. Nothing in the files of CIA indicates negotiations of similar character, at present or in prospect, between the USSR and other West Coast Latin American countries. It was reported, in February 1948, that a Colombian fishing company was interested in obtaining fishing privileges in the Galapagos, and it was further reported that this company was believed to be financed by Communists. A subsequent report gave the names of the officers of the company, none of whom is known to have any Communist connections. There have been no further reports from field personnel of this agency or any other agency confirming or adding any light to the original suspicion. It is the opinion of this office that it is unfounded.
3. With regard to the possibility of Russian intelligence being forwarded from Latin America by certain elements in the tuna fleet, ONI reports that there is no clear evidence of such activity. Furthermore, nothing in the files of CIA substantiates this possibility.
4. Note: According to intelligence sources Donald P. Loker is a roving representative of the French Sardine Company and sometimes of other West Coast fishing interests. He is considered an irresponsible publicity seeker.

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1. With regard to Soviet penetration into the fisheries of the West Coast of Mexico, this office has no knowledge of any Soviet-Mexican fishery negotiations such as those reported in the Merkel-Loker correspondence.

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Arno Merkel is a Los Angeles promoter who has an "unsavory reputation" and was under suspicion in 1943 of collaboration with the Japanese in a matter involving the transport of US oil refining machinery.

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Date: 14/11/77 By: 021

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