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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP  
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

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COUNTRY Italy/Austria

DATE: 25X1X6

SUBJECT SVP Negotiations with the Austrian Government

INFO. [REDACTED]

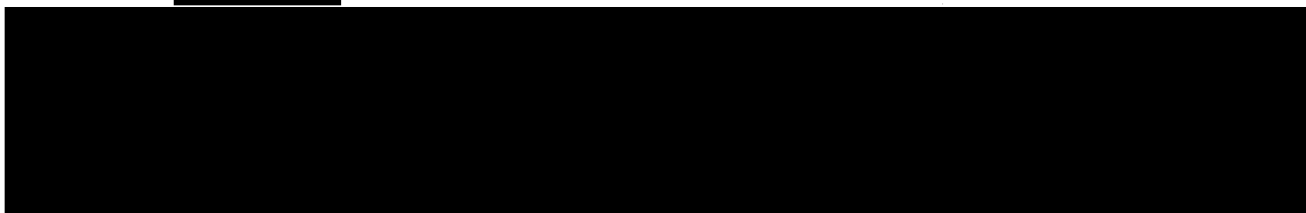
DIST. 23 January 1947

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ORIGIN [REDACTED]

SUPPLEMENT



SOURCE

Drs. Tinzi and von Guggenberg of the SVP (South Tirolean Volkspartei) are reported to have gone to Innsbruck to talk with Counsellor Schöner of the Austrian Foreign Ministry early in December. Following these conversations, the two South Tirolean representatives went up to Vienna for three days, where they had talks with Chancellor Figl, Vice-Chancellor Schärff and Foreign Minister Dr. Gruber.

The results of these talks may be summarized as follows:

I. Optants' Question

1. The South Tiroleans pointed out to Gruber the increasing urgency of the optants' question, with regard to:
  - (a) the need for suitable personnel to be recruited from the optants for Germany now in North Tirol;
  - (b) the fact that the Italians continue to discriminate against those optants for Germany who are back in South Tirol, by refusing them trade licenses etc.
2. Gruber readily agreed to take every possible step to expedite the settlement of this question. In particular, he promised to send a note immediately to the Italian Government, suggesting that the preliminary discussions of this question between the Austrian and Italian Governments, envisaged in the Paris Agreement of 5 September 1946, be initiated immediately. The note will stress the urgency of the question, with regard to the 70,000 optants for Germany who are today eking out a precarious existence in North Tirol. It will further contain the suggestion that the Italian and Austrian Governments appoint special delegates for these conversations.

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3. Gruber asked the SVP representatives to provide him with a memorandum setting forth their views on the settlement of the optants' question (in particular, indicating their maximum and minimum demands) so that he would be prepared for the conversations with the Italians. Once the conversations have begun it is intended that representatives of the SVP and of the Optants will join the Austrian delegation.
4. The South Tirolean representatives were most favorably impressed by Gruber's understanding of this question, and his promise of prompt action.

## II. Ratification of the Paris Agreement

1. The SVP attach considerable importance to the ratification of the Paris Agreement by the Austrian Parliament, because they believe that the Italians will put forward the non-ratification as an excuse for postponing the execution of the Agreement. Gruber is said to oppose the ratification. He argues that legally it is not necessary, and that only the further accords envisaged in the Agreement require ratification. The South Tirolean representatives gained the impression that the real explanation of his opposition is his fear, for internal political reasons, of a further debate on the South Tirolean question. They agree, however, that there are disadvantages to the ratification: namely, the danger of the debate producing "unfortunate remarks" which would prejudice the coming negotiations with the Italians; further, the difficulty for the Austrian Parliament to revert to its claim for self-determination once it had ratified the Agreement, and the realization that this might prove desirable for tactical reasons should the Italians play false in the execution of the Agreement. On the other hand, the primary consideration with the SVP today is to speed up the execution of the Agreement and, as they believe that ratification would serve this end, they refused to accept Gruber's viewpoint. In the end a compromise was reached by Gruber assuring the SVP representatives that he would take immediate steps to obtain the ratification, should the Italian Government demand it as a prerequisite to the execution of the Agreement.
2. Should the Agreement come up for ratification before the Austrian Parliament, the SPÖ (Austrian Socialist Party) with the exception of its North Tirolean Deputies has promised to vote for it.

## III. Austrian Diplomatic Representation in Rome

1. The SVP representatives have expressed their dissatisfaction with the present Austrian diplomatic representation in Rome, and particularly with Minister Rotter. They wished Rotter recalled and replaced by Baron Wimmer. They further wished Dr. Hans Schöffl attached to the Rome Legation as special expert in the South Tirol question.

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2. Gruber told them that he was prepared to recall Rotter, but that he could not replace him by Baron Wimmer because the Socialists would not agree to it. He informed them, however, that he thought of appointing Dr. Schwarzenberg (at present Counsellor in Paris) as Austrian Minister in Rome. He also agreed to Dr. Schöffl's joining the Rome Legation.
3. The South Tiroleans are completely satisfied, and agree that Schwarzenberg is a better man for the post than their friend Baron Wimmer.

IV. Special Austrian Commissioner for South Tirolean Affairs

1. The South Tiroleans requested the appointment of a special Austrian Commissioner with an office in Innsbruck rather than in Vienna to supervise the execution of the Paris Agreement. Both Gruber and Chancellor Figl agreed to such an appointment, but Figl maintained that the Commissioner should reside in Vienna, arguing that "the separatist tendencies in North Tirol are already too strong for my liking". The South Tiroleans replied that Vienna was too distant from Bolzano, and finally Figl gave way.
2. Dr. Kneusl, former Landesamtdirektor in Innsbruck, has been chosen as Commissioner, and will take up his new duties early in the New Year. The Office for South Tirol in Innsbruck will be reorganized and placed under his direction.

V. The Autonomy Question

1. Gruber allegedly told the South Tiroleans that it was for them to take the initiative in the negotiations with the Italians concerning the setting up of the autonomous regime in South Tirol. However, he said he would always be prepared to intervene on their behalf should they need his support on any particular point.
2. The South Tiroleans asked him if he could not obtain a clarification of the issue of provincial versus regional autonomy. Gruber hedged on this point, intimating that he would rather postpone any intervention "until May next, when the Austrian Government should be in a far stronger bargaining position".
3. He expressed approval of the steps taken by the SVP to date to bring about some form of collaboration between Bolzano and Trento.

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4. The SVP have decided to send a delegation down to Rome to discuss the autonomy question with the competent Italian Authorities and, if possible, with De Gasperi himself. Herr Amonn and Drs. Raffeiner and Volgger are certain members of this delegation. It is also probable that Dr. Tinzl will join it, and the advisability of including a socialist representative is under discussion.

VI. Visit to Vice-Chancellor Schärff

1. The South Tirolean representatives paid a courtesy visit to Vice-Chancellor Schärff, with whom they were most favorably impressed. Schärff assured them that the SPO would support any arrangements they made with Gruber as "there are no differences between the OVP (Austrian Volkspartei) and SPO on the South Tirol question.
2. On the whole, the South Tiroleans were fully satisfied with the results of their Vienna visit. Dr. Tinzl told his colleagues of the SVP subsequently that the only difference of opinion he foresaw between them and the Austrian Government was on the time question: While the SVP attach the greatest importance to the immediate execution of the Paris Agreement, in view of the unsettled mood of their people, the Austrian Government is apparently of the opinion that the execution of the Agreement should be postponed until next spring when the Government expects to be in a far stronger bargaining position.

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