

Approved For Release

25X1

2008/11/18 :

CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130

D

e

Approved For Release

2008/11/18 :

CIA-RDP85T00875R001100130

Secret

25X1



DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

Croatian Emigre Activity

**CIA
DOCUMENT SERVICES BRANCH
FILE COPY
DO NOT DESTROY**

Secret

88
15 September 1972
No. 2069/72

Page Denied

SECRET

25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
15 September 1972

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Croatian Emigre Activity

With power groups jockeying for position inside Yugoslavia as that nation looks ahead to the not too distant succession period, radical anti-Communist emigres have stepped up their campaign for an independent Croatia. Throughout post-war history, Titoist Yugoslavia has been subjected--mainly by the heirs of Ante Pavelic's fascist Croatian Ustashi--to emigre propoganda and sporadic terrorism in the form of bombings and more recently assassinations. These emigres have taken new heart from the upsurge in Croatian nationalism in 1971, from the knowledge that the time left for Tito--who was 80 on 25 May--to act as a stabilizing influence, is at best limited, and from the successes scored by other terrorists. The outrage perpetrated by fedayeen at the Munich Olympics may have sparked the hijacking on 15 September of a Swedish airliner by Croat separatists. It is part of a pattern of increasingly frequent ustashi, the Croatian word for "terrorist," attacks over the last 18 months.

Background

Aided and abetted by Mussolini, the Croatian Ustashi was founded in the late 1920s under the leadership of the exile Ante Pavelic. Its history between World War I and World War II featured sabotage and murder, highlighted by the assassination of Yugoslav King Alexander in 1934. When Hitler occupied Yugoslavia, Pavelic became head of a puppet Croatian state, ushering in one of the bloodiest chapters of World War II. Thousands of non-Croats were put to death in a wanton slaughter.

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence.

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

Following the war Pavelic and his followers went underground. Today, ustashi no longer refers to a specific body or organization, but is a generic term applied to the plethora of emigre groups pledged to separate Croatia from the Yugoslav federation by any means necessary. Membership in these groups is generally small and fluctuating. Their financial backing comes mainly from the established Croatia emigre communities in Western Europe and the US. Their political philosophies range from fascism to quasi-socialism, but they are united in nationalism and opposition to Tito.

The word ustashi, terrorist, accurately describes the modus operandi of these numerous Croatian emigre groups. Although the Croatian Liberation Movement is supposedly the heir to Pavelic's organization, other former ustashi operatives have infiltrated other Croatian emigre organizations, prodding the more radical elements to terrorism. Wittingly or not, many of the Croatian emigre organizations (estimated at 17) in the US, Western Europe and Australia have ustashi connections or are subject to the machinations of former ustashi.

Until the late 1960s ustashi activity centered on bombing Yugoslav installations. In 1968, however, a shift in tactics occurred and Yugoslav officials became the targets. In June of that year, the chief of the Yugoslav Military Mission in West Berlin was severely wounded by gunfire. Since then emigre terrorism has become more violent. On 10 February 1971, the Yugoslav Consulate General in Goteborg, Sweden, was occupied by terrorists who attempted, without success, to hold its occupants for \$100,000 ransom and to obtain the release of a fellow terrorist then on trial in Yugoslavia. The Goteborg incident was followed by the assassination of the Yugoslav Ambassador to Sweden, Vladimir Rolovic, in April 1971. The hijacking of the Swedish airliner is an attempt to exchange the plane, its crew and 86 passengers for the assassins of Ambassador Rolovic.

These terrorists mean business. In late January they blew up a Stockholm-to-Belgrade airliner, killing 27 of its 28 passengers. They may have been

-2-

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

aiming to blow up the Yugoslav Premier, who flew this route the following day. In early July a group of 19 ustashi guerrillas infiltrated into western Bosnia-Hercegovina in a none-too-successful effort to incite armed rebellion.

The group most likely responsible for today's hijacking is the Croatian Revolutionary Brotherhood (Hrvatsko Revoljucionarno Bratstvo--HRB) that was founded in 1961 in Australia. It has tried to infiltrate terrorist groups into Yugoslavia and to carry out attacks on Yugoslav installations abroad. Its existence did not become known until 1968.

25X1

Since then it has gone further underground and has shifted its operations to Scandinavia. It is this organization which is most likely behind a recent spate of bombings in Sweden and in Yugoslavia.

Other Ustashi Groups

The most notorious of Croatian emigre organizations, the Croatian National Committee (Hrvatski Narodni Odbor--HNO), is headquartered in West Berlin; it was led by the late Branko Jelic, a former lieutenant in Pavelic's Ustashi organization. Jelic founded the HNO in 1951 following a falling out with Pavelic. Frustrated by the marked improvement in Yugoslav ties with the West in recent years, Jelic claimed that he sought Soviet support for a free and independent Croatia. Although Jelic said he had visited Moscow, there is no proof he got anything more than a low-level verbal endorsement from the Soviets. Nevertheless, Jelic's flirtation with the Kremlin carried with it the implication of Soviet meddling in Yugoslav affairs.

25X1

The Croatian Liberation Movement (HOP) was formed by Pavelic in 1957 after several years of squabbling between ustashi factions. It is headquartered in Spain. Following Pavelic's death in 1959, HOP came under the leadership of Dr. Stjepan Hefer, an official of the Croatian Home Guard (Hrvatski Domobrani). Under

-3-

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

Hefer, HOP degenerated into mere feuding. As a result it maintained a low profile throughout the 1960s, relying on like-minded colleagues to be the Croatian standard bearers.

The Croatian National Resistance (Hrvatski Narodni Otpor) was founded by a former ustashi general, Maks Lubric. This is a quasi-military organization with branches in Spain, West Germany, France, Sweden, the US, Canada, and Australia. Lubric was murdered in 1968 in an emigre feud; since then, the Australian branch has emerged as the dominant wing of this organization; this wing is led by Srecko Rover.

[redacted] Largely because of its activity in Australia, the Resistance is undoubtedly high on the Yugoslav list.

25X1

The Union of Croatian Communists Abroad (UCCA) is a relative newcomer on the emigre scene. The league appears to be some sort of ustashi smoke screen designed to discredit the legal Croatian Communist party back home through a variety of means. It claims to have ties to some of the Croatian leaders and condemns others. Founded by Velimir Tomulic, the current chairman of the UCCA is Tomo Sedlo. The UCCA has close contacts with Jelic's HNO. It has prompted a disproportionately high response from Yugoslav officials because of the ties to Jelic and its implied claim to be the true Communist leadership for Croatia.

Outlook

Belgrade has sought to cooperate with Western governments in curbing emigre terrorism, but these efforts have not prevented a new upsurge of attacks in 1971 and 1972.

25X1

[redacted] Anti-terrorist feelings, from Tito down to the man in the street, were already running high in Yugoslavia following the guerrilla attack last July and the Munich atrocities.

-4-

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

The hijacking in Sweden will add fuel to the flames, and, if Belgrade is not satisfied with the outcome, it is likely to take matters into its own hands. This could include instructions to the Yugoslav Intelligence Services to remove emigre leaders and emigre groups from this kind of action. The Yugoslav Intelligence Services and the ustashi emigres have already engaged in a gangland-style fight in Munich and in Spain over an eight-month period in late 1968 and early 1969. Six lives were lost then; a similar gang war may thus lie ahead.

-5-

SECRET

25X1