

Telegram No.

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Report B-2084. See my 703 Snafu 516 Lummy 839 following conversation reported in this message. HOETTEL made second trip here from Vienna and on this occasion we arranged put our 502 in contact with him. Hoettel who I am convinced is righthand man of KALTENBRUNNER gave following picture of situation Vienna:

Within ranks of Austrian SS the majority, who mostly Austrian nationals, desires liquidate Party and arrange orderly transfer of administration to Western Powers. This plan involves elimination of SS elements favoring continuation of war, particularly BORMANN supporters and a number of the Gauleiters.

This viewpoint was also confirmed to us by 503 who has also been here again and who saw Kaltenbrunner between Hoettel's first and second trip and who advised us that second trip was at Kaltenbrunner's special request. According to Hoettel Kaltenbrunner had entrusted him with task of establishing contact with Austrian opposition circles with view of supporting anti-Communist elements. Because of his Catholicism and fact his father Social Democratic school reformer Hoettel deemed qualified for this task which facilitated by anti-Communist leaning of Austrian workers. Hoettel claimed contact with anti-Nazi worker leaders Steiermark, Wiener Neustadt and Vienna and also with Catholic opposition groups and cited name of Catholic leader RUDOLPH as opposition leader. (From 110. This name checks with K-28 report). Claimed he knew other leaders only under their cover names. Hoettel promised return here with certain opposition leaders and hinted even at possibility of bringing out SEITZ as well as representatives of workers and Catholic opposition.

This program was subject of discussion in Salzburg attended by Kaltenbrunner, NEUBACHER, GLAISE HORSTENAU,

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NEUSTAEDTER-STUERMER, and Hoettel upon latter's return to Austria after second trip.

Regarding general situation Hoettel declared Nazis expected wave of Anti-Communism in Balkan area, that in Rumania Iron Guard strengthened and present party of Maniu opposed to Communism. Similar developments in Jugoslavia. He gave these developments as reason why at present time in spite of unfavorable situation on East and West Fronts SS divisions among them Leibstandarte remained on PLATTEN-SEE front while von WEICHS'S army in Croatia remained there and relatively inactive. He said Alpine reduit would be finished and stocked in about 3 months, that STEYRWERKE is already underground and producing particularly such defensive weapons as Panzerfäuste. It is intended that Wehrmacht units as well as SS be taken into reduit including families of fighting men.

As regards situation within Nazi party Hoettel stated that split between West and East oriented persons becoming more apparent. LEY and Arbeitsfront plus Bormann and many Gauleiters go with latter. Kaltenbrunner and his followers belong to western oriented group. He predicted sort of TAU-ROGGEN movement with the uncovering of Western front and march toward East leaving government of Germany to Western Allies while continuing to fight as free-corps bands.

From l10. The above is well within range of possibility. As you know there are other indications that certain SS elements are trying to save their skins by turning to West, dropping their attacks against local anti-Nazi movements or even favoring them and preparing to follow line which will obviate necessity of their joining die-hards in last ditch struggle in reduit.

Elements of similarity in movements of von EPP in Bavaria, Kaltenbrunner in Austria and our contacts in Italy are striking. It seems to me that these trends offer possibility of checkmating any effective organization of German reduit. Interesting question is whether Himmler is pulling strings behind these varying movements and possibly preparing himself to desert the die-hards.

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