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8 February 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR: CPP  
SUBJECT : Review of BGFIEND

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3828  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2007

Original Objectives

Project BGFIEND as approved in May 1949 envisaged ultimately a coup d'etat to overthrow the Hoxha regime. Preliminary to this objective were the formation of a political committee, the execution of a propaganda campaign, and the training and infiltration of agents into Albania. Corollary objectives, independent of the ultimate goal of the plan, were to eliminate Albania as a training and holding base for Greek insurgents, to deprive the USSR of an outpost on the Mediterranean, to stimulate resistance activities within other satellite countries, and to provide OPC with a fund of experience in clandestine operations involving the coordinated application of several techniques against a single target.

Progress up to 6 December 1949

The political committee was established and was announced in August 1949. The original chairman died of natural causes in N.Y.C. in September, and a successor was chosen in November. Virtually no propaganda activities have been carried out other than a few proclamations broadcast by B.B.C., and some propaganda leaflets distributed in Albania. Plans to use a ship in the Adriatic as a radio transmitting base have not materialized. The British succeeded in infiltrating six reconnaissance teams into Southern Albania, of which some were captured and some returned. OPC did not succeed in recruiting the agents for training at the Malta Base, and availability of this base was temporarily cancelled December 1, in accordance with previous British cover arrangements.

Related developments included the conclusion of the Greek civil war and a stepped up Cominform offensive against

Tito

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Tito to the point where direct action appeared probable although the form of the action could not be predicted. The Italian Government established diplomatic relations with Albania in May 1949. The British countenanced the execution by Brigadier McLean of a visit to Tito, the nature of which remains unknown to OPC. A purge of the Albanian Communist Party was carried out during the summer to remove untrustworthy members from the government.

Present Status

Under date of 6 December 1949, OPC presented to the State Department a memorandum, the contents of which had been agreed upon between OPC and the British Service, which contained a reassessment of the operation and recommended a reformulation of FIEND-Valuable objectives. The new objectives were:

"(1) . . . The establishment and maintenance, both inside and outside Albania, of capabilities which will allow us maneuverability in a developing situation and which will permit us to exploit any developments which may occur with respect to either Yugoslavia or Albania.

"(2) Action . . . designed to weaken or eliminate the usefulness to the Cominform of Albania as a base of operations against Yugoslavia . . . ."

A number of specific activities were proposed under the recommended objectives. These included support of the Committee, propaganda, economic measures, infiltration of agents, establishment of a pool of Albanian refugees, and investigation of the desirability of cutting other governments into the intelligence aspects of the operation.

The December 6 memorandum was approved by the Department of State, and was concurred in by the British Foreign Office except as to infiltration of agents and collaboration with other services. The State Department has agreed to make representations to the British Foreign Office with a view of obtaining concurrence in these proposals. Meanwhile, the British have indicated that they would be willing to abandon the entire operation.

Assessment of present objectives

As stated above, two objectives were listed in the

revised

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revised plan of 6 December. The pertinent paragraphs are quoted in full:

"(1) We have so far carried out certain limited operational reconnaissances in Albania intended to discover the prospects of upsetting the present Soviet dominated regime. Our activities should now exploit the new situation created by the Tito/Cominform dispute to our advantage. Our primary objective with respect to Albania is, therefore, the establishment and maintenance, both inside and outside Albania, of capabilities which will allow us maneuverability in a developing situation and which will permit us to exploit any developments which may occur with respect to either Yugoslavia or Albania.

(2) Action taken with respect to Albania should be designed to weaken or eliminate the usefulness to the Cominform of Albania as a base of operations against Yugoslavia, always bearing in mind the possible repercussions in Yugoslavia of such action. The operation should be continuously reviewed in the light of such considerations."

Critical examination of paragraph (1) leads to serious doubt that it in fact states an objective, in the sense that it clearly defines a goal toward which we should work. It would seem that the "establishment and maintenance . . . of capabilities which will allow us maneuverability in a developing situation and which will permit us to exploit any developments which may occur . . ." is more in the nature of a truism, or platitude, than a clear goal. It is believed significant that the PW annex for this operation makes no reference to this objective, while quoting the second in full.

Paragraph (2) states in effect that the objective is to prevent an attack on Yugoslavia by the Cominform states from Albania. This could include action ranging from political pressures to overthrow of the Hoxha regime.

Neither of the two paragraphs, therefore, seem to define our goals adequately or to delimit our aims which sufficient clarity.

#### Discussion

The principal developments since this operation was

originally

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originally conceived have been the virtual cessation of the Greek civil war, and the increasing importance to U.S. interests of the Yugoslav - USSR conflict (the latter being treated in NSC 18/4, dated November 17, 1949). With the removal of the Greek guerrilla problem from the list of our objectives in this area the importance of Albania as a target of clandestine - type effort diminishes. (In view of the fact that this was the primary objective of the original British plan Valuable, it is possible that this development accounts for waning British interest in the Fiend operation.) The intensification of the Yugoslav-USSR conflict and the concurrent growing U.S. desire to see Tito successfully withstand Cominform pressure has made necessary a reassessment of the original maximum objective of ~~CS~~FIEND, viz., the overthrow of the Hoxha regime by coup d'etat. With the USSR appearing more and more inclined to bring about the liquidation of the Tito heresy in Yugoslavia, it becomes undesirable from the U.S. viewpoint to provoke an incident which might give the Cominform an opportunity to use troops in the Balkans. It is felt that any effort to displace the Soviet-controlled regime in Albania by force, and especially an externally generated effort, would impel the Soviet Union to counter it with military aid, and provide the Cominform with a splendid opportunity to invade Yugoslavia. (On the other hand if developments should occur in the Tito - Cominform conflict other than contemplated in current intelligence estimates, and the USSR shows signs of accommodating itself to Tito in some fashion, then it would be desirable again to review the FIEND operation.)

In the light of these developments with respect to Albania it would appear that we should rule out the coup d'etat as a goal for the time being. Our broad objectives in Albania should then be substantially the same as our objectives in the other satellites, which are set forth in NSC 58/2.

The immediate objectives and the relative priority of effort in Albania should be determined on the basis of an appraisal of Albania as against the other orbit countries. On this basis Albania would appear to fall below Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia or Poland in terms of its relative importance, but would make a somewhat better showing in terms of the potential short-run effectiveness of limited OPC efforts, due to current conditions in Albania itself. It should be recognized also that as a result of the effort already devoted to Albania, OPC has built up certain assets - such as, detailed knowledge of Albania and some specialized personnel - which could not be readily transferred to other uses.

Recommendations

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Recommendations

From this evaluation it is believed that our objectives for BGFIEND can be restated as follows:

1. To create conditions within Albania which will make it increasingly a liability to the USSR, and a continuing source of concern to it.
2. To prepare for the time when Albania shall cease to be a Soviet satellite.

Under these objectives the following specific activities should be approved.

1. Maintenance of a political committee and continuing effort to develop this committee into a unified and representative body of Albanian non-fascist elements.
2. Psychological warfare designed to create and sustain unrest and dissatisfaction among the population. This should be distinguished from propaganda activities designed to stir the people ~~in~~ to an uprising against the government.
3. Economic warfare to make worse present economic conditions and to make it increasingly necessary and difficult for the USSR to furnish economic aid to the impoverished country.
4. Infiltration of agents into Albania for the purpose of:
  - a. disseminating propaganda
  - b. conducting reconnaissance for operational intelligence
  - c. organizing and unifying resistance groups

If British experience is a guide, this activity is costly from the standpoint of rewards measured against resources required to accomplish a mission. It is believed the emphasis should be toward introducing a few agents and maintaining them within the country for longer periods than the British agents remained.

There remains for consideration the policy OPC should follow in case the British withdraw from the operation. If this withdrawal is made without objection to OPC's continuing the operation we should continue toward our limited objectives. If future developments indicate the likelihood of the Stalinist regime's disintegrating, consultation should be held with the British with the view of concerting U.S. and British policy and actions. If the British indicate their desire for mutual abandonment of the operation, we should cancel BGFIEND and initiate a new project embodying the same objectives in a revised operational plan. Whether we should follow this course in the face of continued British objections is a question which must be settled after the British position is more clearly known.

Summary


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Summary

In summary, it is recommended that OPC continue to prepare for and undertake the specific activities listed above. These activities include those recommended in the December 6 Memorandum with the exception of the camp for Albanian refugees and the problem of collaboration with other Services. The former is considered to be more expensive in terms of field personnel required to operate it than the significance of Albania would warrant, and the problem of cutting in the Greeks, Italians, or French is considered to be one to be decided on the basis of circumstances which develop as the operation proceeds. It is also recommended that the objectives toward which these activities are directed be redefined as specified herein. It is further recommended that the operation be given a lower priority in terms of the amount of effort allocated to it to substantially lower rank than the other satellite states. Finally, it is recommended that the U.S. not be markedly influenced in its aims by British decisions as to continued collaboration in the operation.

  
Deputy, Staff I

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