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OFFICIAL DISPATCH

VIA AIR POUCH

Dispatch No: MGB/A-3565

30 March 1949

TO : Chief, Foreign Branch "1"
FROM : Chief of Station, Karlsruhe
SUBJECT: Review of Bamberg Operations

1. The original purpose and intent of setting up a Bamberg Sub-Base was to establish a western zone unit to carry out the operational portion of the Pastime plan. The Bamberg site was selected because of its proximity to the Soviet Zone border. Also taken into consideration were housing for eventual expansion, communications, and accessibility. Bamberg is located 44 km from Coburg and 100 km from Hof which were the two general areas where most of our operating took place. We had proposed to operate westerly over as far as Fulda, however, as this report shows, it was not necessary to extend operations into that area. Field work to supplement the Pastime program was started in late November of 1948. For making preliminary contacts, members of Bavarian border police were used, and once contact had been established with the Soviet Zone police authorities, we shifted on our own without the knowledge of the German police agencies, CIC, or MIS. This was accomplished primarily through the use of a beat-up Volkswagen, direct contact with agents, and in one area (Neustadt) which we visited rather frequently, by appearing as black marketeers.

2. Contacting Soviet Zone border police in the late fall of 1948 was accomplished with much more ease and smoothness than we at first anticipated. Despite regulations of the Soviet Zone police prohibiting their coming within 150 meters of the border and prohibiting them from meeting their Amzon counterparts, in virtually every Kommando-stelle along the border there are border guards, or in some cases even officials from the Kommandaturas, who frequently come down to the border to do a little black marketeering and to gossip with the Bavarian border police. This does not hold true for areas adjacent to official border crossing points such as above Ludwigstadt and Hof. In these areas there are generally several Soviet control points and the border police are under much more stringent control. In the Neustadt area where most of our contacts with the border police took place there are only three widely separated Soviet control points. These were staffed by one officer and seven enlisted men, spending most of their time drinking schnapps with the local farmers. They generally carried out their controls in the following manner: the enlisted men on duty to control two or three Kommando points would call the Kommando-leiter and ask that his name be registered in the control book at a specific time. The Kommando-leiter generally did this and the Soviet EM's departed for the house of a local farmer and spent their eight hours of duty with a bottle. This sort of loose control by the Soviets is not at all uncommon. We at one time tried to make contact with a few Soviet control points on the theory that as long as there is only one officer per unit he could be approached and arrangements for contacts be made, but the entire unit of a Soviet control point is changed every twenty days making it impractical to attempt contact.

3. As previously mentioned, contact with the Sovzon border police was comparatively easy although experience has shown that one must use considerable caution because there still are certain members of the border police that are known as two hundred percenters or extremely

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rabid SED constituents. We found that the best way to contact Sovzon border police sympathetic with the western cause was to first go to the local Kommissar of the Bavarian border police. The Kommissars generally know who the Soviet Zone policemen are, who are to be avoided and who the border police are that can be contacted. We found that the Bavarian border police are exceptionally well informed and they are also up to date on most all of the illegal border crossing points. On the low level between the Bavarian border police and the Soviet Zone border police there is considerable friendship in some areas and illegal border crossing can be carried out without any difficulty whatsoever. Our experience has shown that the controls on the Bavarian side of the border are much more thorough than on the Soviet Zone side. Soviet Zone border controls generally take place directly on the border while Bavarian Zone border controls take place not only at the border but on streets, railroads, and in forests going sometimes as far as 30 km's behind the border.

4. Another excellent source for making contacts with illegal border crossers is in restaurants and Gaststätten in towns near the border. In Hof, Coburg, Kulmbach, and Ludwigstadt we came across small hotels whose main source of revenue came from border crossers. The type of border crosser staying in such a hotel is generally quasi-professional and the police are aware of their activity but generally look in another direction. In recent weeks, since the counter-blockade program has been instituted by the Western Powers, large scale illegal "freight" border operations have virtually ceased and most crossings now are "passenger" traffic type, or individuals crossing to visit friends or for business people who cannot obtain the necessary legal crossing permits. We discovered that after visiting an aforementioned type of hotel a few times, and after getting a little chummy with the proprietor, he could arrange a border crossing or recommend various individuals living on the border who could assist one or even take one over the border. We started making a list of such crossing points but came to the conclusion it is unnecessary for they exist virtually all along the border and meeting the right type of individual to direct one to cross the border presents no problem to anyone speaking German. [] and the undersigned became so friendly with a group of border operatives at Furth-am-Berg, near Neustadt, that we were considered one of their group and invited to a party given by various local residents of both sides of the border engaged in border traffic, as well as a few Soviet Zone and a few Bavarian Border policemen. It was an informal little Faschings party where everyone was called by his first name. I cite the above merely to show that despite rules, rumours, and the supposed difficulties rampant in the border area, there is in reality considerable fluidness on the border. In a short time one can intermingle with such a group and for a little compensation, find sufficient reliable people to carry on border operations on virtually any scale.

5. As mentioned in one of our raw intelligence reports, it has come to our attention that a great many of the Volkspolizei in the Soviet Zone are Sudeten-Germans or other so-called German DP's who are refugees from Silesia or Czechoslovakia. Most of the men expelled from such areas have been unable to find employment, are generally scorned by their neighbors and by the local inhabitants of the areas where they are forced to reside and have no other alternative in order to make a living and support their families but to join a police organization. The pay is attractive and they get the highest ration card possible in the Soviet Zone. In reality, however, most of these men are bitter anti-Communists marking time and hoping some day soon that the Communists will be defeated and they can return to their homelands. In dealing with some of the Sudeten-Germans, it came to our attention that they are considerably homogeneous and hold together rather solidly as a group. They have as yet not committed any open acts of violence or sabotage but we believe that when the opportunity presents itself that the group will be capable of fairly strong organized resistance.

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6. As [] and the undersigned covered various areas along the border, we became aware of two sorts of activity that may have Stateside interest. The first is that virtually all intelligence units such as CIC, MIS, ONI, RUSTY, and so forth, are engaged in undercover intelligence gathering in the Soviet Zone through border crossers. In our occasional visits to CIC and MIS in Coburg and Hof, the upshot of many of the discussions consisted of an exuberant agent telling us about his latest chain going into the Zone and the successes he had been having with it. We have on a few occasions seen file material justifying this. At Bayreuth we came across a German agent running a chain into the Soviet Zone having as member of the chain an engineer and conductor who make frequent trips to Russia with a railroad brigade. We assumed this to be a RUSTY operation. While sitting in the mess hall of the Hof Sub-Post for luncheon with the chief of the CIC Detachment recently, he pointed out that more than half of the luncheon guests were intelligence operatives of some sort. He even indicated that the British and French were operating along our border areas.

7. Another matter which came to our attention occurred at the regular crossing points. A check of the official register, coupled with a few days observation, showed that a fairly large number of foreign businessmen -- primarily Italian, French, Dutch, and a sprinkling of Americans -- regularly cross the border at various points to carry out business transactions. Most of these men dealt with Tech-Export in Karlshorst. Two Americans representing an aircraft plant in the States, were driving through to Poland to try to arrange a contract for the sale of small aircraft engine parts to the Poles. We observed an Italian businessman going through to contract for the sale of office machinery built in the Soviet Zone and we also talked with a few French business people on their way to conclude a business deal with the Soviets. I do not know to what extent some of these men have been contacted for intelligence purposes. However, all passports bore a military entry permit issued by an American Consulate and if they have not already been contacted by some intelligence agency, it is entirely possible that some of these businessmen making regular trips could be of use from a long range standpoint.

8. The general caliber of informant or agent that can be procured in the areas where we have been operating are of a low level and while this may be satisfactory for the CIC or MIS type of operation, I do not believe it is worthwhile or practical for this organization to maintain an extra base to deal with this type of individual. It is also my opinion that should a condition arise forcing our Berlin operations to evacuate to the Zone, it would be possible within a month to set up a sufficient number of secure courier routes and crossing points in order to carry out the Pastime plan. If we were to continue operations at the Bamberg Base, it would require at least two more case officers because contacts along the border areas consume considerable travel and a great deal of waiting. Most of our contacts were made during the afternoon or at night and very often we did not return to Bamberg before 10 or 11 p.m. The roads are extremely bad in the border areas where contacts are made. It was only because the roads were frozen during the winter that they were passable. On a recent trip to the border, the roads thawed out to such an extent that they were deeply rutted and so muddy that they were impassable.

9. In view of the above, I consider it advisable to close out the Bamberg Sub-Base, but before doing so will make arrangements to keep two or three of the better sources and make sleepers out of the remainder. Also before closing, we will stage a trial operation involving the transmittal of a dummy intelligence pouch through one of our better contacts and agents controlled by [] This will be accomplished before 1 April, at which time the Base will be completely closed out in accordance with verbal instructions by COS.

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Bamberg Operations Base

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