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12 April 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, SR Division

SUBJECT: Courses of Action Should the RIS Surface
AEQUOR TEAM II

1. AEQUOR TEAM II was dispatched on the night of 26/27 August 1952 as a four-man unit. It became involved in a fire-fight with unknown persons on the evening of 9 September 1952 and the primary radio man died of wounds the following day. Nothing was heard from the team until 10 November 1952 when an uncompleted contact was attempted by the alternate operator. The message was finally received in its entirety on 12 November 1952. It informed us of the fiasco and gave a sketchy description of the event. Since the November date, the alternate radio operator has maintained a continuing W/T contact supplemented by one S/W letter from the team member, established as a legal resident of the BSSR.

2. The general tenor of this sustained contact, which until 7 January 1955 included 65 W/T messages, has indicated that the team members may be under RIS control. This possibility was further strengthened by the fact that in the January 1955 contacts, the team berated the dispatchers and the sponsors for calloused negligence and unmerciful negativism toward the team in their moment of need. Since then no further transmissions have been received.

3. It may be assumed, therefore, that the RIS, now aware that no further operational benefit can be attained from a continued contact, has curtailed this operation. If this is the case, then the RIS may surface the remaining members of AEQUOR TEAM II in an effort to achieve some last-ditch PP exploitation and attempt to embarrass the United States. Should this be the case, it is suggested that the following courses of action be taken:

- a. The Agency should continue its "no-comment" policy.
- b. The Department of State should deny the Soviet accusations, adding to those denials any material which would belittle the Soviet claims.

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c. The Byelorussian National Council (BNR) as sponsors of the team, should accept the responsibility for dispatching the team. They should state that the team was infiltrated a number of years ago upon the strength of the BNR's own resources without any external aid, or better yet that this was a stay-behind team, which had been active since before the end of the war. They should further state that the team members surfaced are not the only anti-communist element within the Byelorussian SSR, adding that those who have remained will continue the incessant struggle against the communist usurper of the Byelorussian Republic.

4. The course of action outlined above would serve to take the spotlight away from U. S. involvement. It would further tend to raise the prestige of the BNR within the emigration by showing that the organization is active in its anti-communist struggle and would call attention to the fact that an anti-regime struggle is continuing within the Soviet orbit.

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Chief, SR/3

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