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SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2005

HSC/OPS/010

ONE GAMBIT

22 January 1947

TO : AB-52, Berlin
FROM : AB-51, Amzon
SUBJECT : DEFECTION PROJECT SKURIN

Comma

1. The conviction that it may be worth trying to establish control over SKURIN is primarily based on the belief that we have a sufficient amount of information about the man himself, the details of his operations and the organizational breakdown of the service for which he works, to make the threat of passing this information back to his superiors sufficiently real to enforce compliance with our instructions. His fortunes are at a low ebb just now and the impact of the realization that not only are we currently posted on his operations, but that one of his major projects was conceived and sustained by us, gives us a psychological edge over him which he will be hard put to overcome.

2. But this is about as far as we can go in predicting the course of events, for we cannot predict what kind of reaction we will be faced with on SKURIN's part. He may, of course, decide to tell his superior officers that he has been placed under duress. Our hope is that he will place himself under our control in order to escape the serious harm to his intelligence career which could result if the information in our hands should reach his superiors; information which reflects a considerable degree of negligence, improvidence and poor security, to say the least.

3. We must take it for granted that SKURIN is a thoroughly indoctrinated Communist, a loyal officer and a patriotic Russian. At any rate no indications have reached us that he entertains a penchant for Western ideals. Information in our hands therefore has to convey more than mere inadequacy in the performance of his duties if it is to fulfill its objective. In other words as long as SKURIN's superiors can be expected to view his failures merely as operational mishaps which are not in themselves sufficiently significant to render him a liability to Soviet interests, SKURIN is unlikely to cooperate with us,

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in such an event he might even be...
...is it quite conceivable that Skurin's recent performance, in particular the defection of SAVOY, has discredited him to such an extent that one more operational failure would suffice to break him. His frantic efforts to make an arrest to bolster his fortunes appears indicative of the fact that he finds himself in a somewhat precarious position. Inasmuch as the success of subject operation hinges on certain elements over which we have no control and whose importance we cannot assess, we feel that in addition to the narrative of his operational errors a more personal element of persuasion should be introduced, something SKURIN would not be in a position to explain away as vagaries of fate which could befall any man in his position. We have in mind here the effective exploitation of what we know about his interpreter and mistress DOCCIA who, due to his intercession, was retained in the service at a time when the bulk of the Luisenstrasse interpreter staff was repatriated to Soviet Russia where an uncertain fate awaited them.

4. Should it turn out, for instance, that DOCCIA through SAVOY has consciously been giving important information to the Americans, obtaining in return the assurance that in the event of her repatriation she would be able to count on American assistance, SKURIN's prospects of receiving lenient treatment from his superiors would be appreciably reduced. The contention that DOCCIA has been a conscious informant of ours is of course notional, yet, it would be almost impossible for SKURIN or DOCCIA to disprove it. DOCCIA cannot deny having met SAVOY at frequent occasions alone. Nor can she deny having talked to SAVOY about her apprehensions regarding her possible repatriation. Finally, we have obtained information which she gave (and only she could give) to SAVOY.

5. The first phase of subject operation, the process of forceful and persuasive indoctrination of SKURIN designed to make him understand what we know and what this knowledge implies in terms of his future career and personal safety represents only the groundwork for the actual defection. It should be based on solid irrefutable facts, for unsupported bluff may tip SKURIN off to the fact that our pretended omniscience rests on a rather shaky foundation. The bare facts may well speak for themselves: the von GERSDORFF case (a notional version would be that von GERSDORFF was an American agent who successfully penetrated the MVD Neissensee); the MUELLER-BORNE case (controlled by us - the patent files selected by us and doctored up by adding incorrect scientific data which will take Soviet scientists a long time to unscramble) and last but not least the many facets of the SAVOY operation. In order

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able, we might add that as a result of his negligence and DEBET's defection the identity of numerous agents and informants controlled by Luisenstrasse has become known to us. His refusal to cooperate would result in the piecemeal liquidation of those individuals, informing Luisenstrasse in each case that it was SKURIN who tipped us off as to their identity. Quite a number of variations could be played on this theme. Whoever is assigned to execute the first phase of the operation will have to brief himself on all the details of the SAVY operation in order to be able to revise the legend in adaptation to unforeseen complications.

6. The second phase of the operation which will establish the type of control we shall exercise over SKURIN will no doubt be the more difficult of the two phases. SKURIN ~~won't~~ undoubtedly produce more valuable intelligence as a double agent than as a defector (in the narrow sense), however, he may not relish the idea of putting himself at our mercy. He may reason that he stands a better chance of survival through defecting than through allowing himself to be brought into a rather delicate double agent scheme. If, in the course of the operation, this turns out to be the case, we should try to impress upon SKURIN that the door to ultimate total defection is always open once he has proved his worth. In any case we should make the strongest efforts to convince him that the risks inherent in working both for Luisenstrasse and Huettenweg are negligible, (in fact that a relationship of this type may ultimately result in the promotion to Major which he has been sweating out for over a year) he should be told that we are naturally interested in seeing him grow in stature and that it would ill serve our purposes to see him relegated to a second-string position in a low-echelon headquarters. It is in our interest to convince his superiors that he is a resourceful intelligence officer who should be rewarded with more responsible assignments. (Conversely we would merely harm ourselves were we to use our relationship to him as a convenient pipeline for low class deception material or by assigning to him tasks outside the normal scope of his functions.) In positive terms, our policy would be to put him on the trail of good agent prospects and to provide him with good seduction material as heretofore. Here again it will largely depend on the persuasiveness of the case officer whether we convince SKURIN that not only can the risks of this operation be kept to an absolute minimum, but also the advantages he is liable to reap in terms of improved professional standing are bound to be considerable. In this connection a hint (notional) that one of SKURIN's colleagues in Luisenstrasse

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of time without undue exposure would serve the same purpose of reinforcing our argument that the risks are negligible and of warning him that we would be sure to learn about any double cross on his part.

7. The above should be regarded as general recommendations, not as binding instructions. The actual development of the operation may necessitate last minute changes and an altogether different approach. While we should be agreed on the objective of this operation, any attempt at tying down the case officer to a specific course of action should be discouraged. We should not rush into this operation in blind disregard of the many difficulties that will accompany any attempt to establish control over a Soviet intelligence officer. Even on paper our plan does not look foolproof, leaving out of account, as it does, the human equation. In this connection two of the more serious problems likely to occur should be touched upon:

a. The role of DOCCIA. Assuming that we convince SKURIN that his mistress-interpreter DOCCIA has played him false, would it be advisable to have her continue in her old position? In other words, should she become a party to our special arrangement with SKURIN? This would doubtless introduce an element of risk which would be better to avoid; however, we may have little choice in the matter. For your consideration we wish to submit these suggestions: One possibility is to double DOCCIA too, without indicating to her the nature of our understanding with SKURIN and likewise without letting the latter know that we have reached an understanding with DOCCIA. This, needless to say, would be a rather delicate operation. The alternative is to connive in her liquidation by the NKVD. Inasmuch as SKURIN would have to furnish a plausible explanation for his failure to capture GAMBIT, an equally plausible legend could be prepared which would pin on DOCCIA the leakage of information that tipped GAMBIT off.

b. The role of FORD. It will be difficult to withhold from SKURIN the knowledge that FORD is our agent. In fact there would be little advantage in not letting him draw his own conclusions. FORD might be of use as a cut-out between us and SKURIN although in view of his performance in the case of GAMBIT we doubt whether he is well equipped to play that role. If we could possibly arrange it, FORD should not learn about our understanding with SKURIN. He would then be available for liquidation by SKURIN as the latter's first arrest under the new regime.

8. One of the major problems we had to face at the time this operation was first conceived was the arrangement of a meeting between SKURIN and his case officer. However, it now

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ready made opening which we can ill afford to neglect. Since SKURIN's professional future may hinge on success or failure in his executing this arrest, he will doubtless be willing to take some long chances in order to carry it out. Judging from previous events SKURIN is unlikely to undertake such an operation in the U.S. sector. By his own admission, however, he would not hesitate to make an arrest in the French sector. The logical meeting place would thus be in that sector. Therefore FORD will probably be instructed to invite GAMBIT to the French sector for dinner or a movie. If everything goes according to plan, SKURIN will most likely try to intercept GAMBIT at a pre-arranged place en route to the rendezvous. However, the fine points of SKURIN's future actions can hardly be predicted by us and it is therefore futile at this point to suggest any specific course of action. We realize that moving the scene of action into the French sector imposes certain restrictions on you and may preclude the enlistment of CIC help. We will certainly have to dispense with the formidable array of Constabulary armor which was at our disposal during some of our less successful operations in the U.S. sector. Presumably, however, this handicap will also impose restrictions on SKURIN and we should not let jurisdictional qualms interfere with this operation.

9. If, contrary to expectation and precedent, SKURIN should finally begin to see the merits of penetrating OMCUS through GAMBIT instead of arresting her, the defection itself could possibly be entrusted to GAMBIT, or to FORD, or to both. However, since there are no indications that SKURIN may decide to undertake such an operation, it does not seem worthwhile to launch into a description of the possible ways in which it could be exploited for our purposes.

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