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MS/54 D-207/3a

May 18, 1953

FY 1954 MUTUAL SECURITY PRESENTATION

Section 101(a)(1) MSA 1951, Escapees

*Copy Recalled -  
PEP (State)*

*Karsten Amendment*

Attached is a revision of MS/54 D-207/3, May 4. When detached from the classified pages of this paper (including the cover sheet) pages 1 - 3 constitute the unclassified version of the briefing paper on the Escapee Program. Pages 4 - 6, classified "SECRET Security Information" and restricted to the use of Executive branch personnel concerned with the Mutual Security Presentation, consist of information additional to that appearing in the original circulated on May 4.

Eugene M. Schaeffer  
Secretary

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State Department & USAID reviews completed

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Significance of Escapee Program in  
Relation to U.S. National Objectives

After the phase-out of the major post-war refugee programs it became increasingly apparent that there existed a need for an organization to support U.S. interests in (and coordinate efforts on behalf of) Iron Curtain escapees, in direct relation to U.S. national objectives in the fields of military and intelligence activities, and political and psychological warfare. It is recognized that:

(a) The reception, care and opportunities for resettlement offered escapees establish a climate favorable to the continued flow and cooperation of individuals who may be of value to U.S. programs developed pursuant to approved NSC policies. Of particular importance is the fact that the numbers and usefulness of defectors, or high-grade intelligence sources, is directly affected by the treatment afforded to all escapees as well as that given to the select group;

(b) Neglect of persons who escape from behind the Iron Curtain would do great damage to U.S. programs directed toward the USSR and the Eastern European satellites, as it would appear to confirm communist propaganda to the effect that the capitalist Western world is indifferent to the fate of the common man. Word of neglect, or particularly lack of hope for onward movement from refugee camps, inevitably leaks back and is exploited behind the Iron Curtain. This vitiates the work of the information and psychological warfare programs in picturing the West to the captive populations of Eastern Europe as a free community with basic concern for the dignity and worth of the individual, and limits the ability of the U.S. missions behind the Iron Curtain to pursue their major objective of securing friendship for the West on the part of these populations;

(c) Adequate reception and care, and assistance in resettlement will provide support for U.S. psychological programs, and will make a positive contribution in facilitating and advancing other existing or future U.S. programs concerning escapees;

(d) Escapees create or intensify political and economic problems, particularly in overpopulated areas or areas in which other refugee groups exist.

The Escapee Program is thus in distinct opposition to the Soviet objectives of hermetically sealing off the Iron Curtain countries from the rest of the world and of shutting off the enslaved populations therein

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from all knowledge of or friendship for the free world. It also runs counter to the Soviet objectives of promoting political tension and disintegration within the free countries of Europe. Therefore, the Soviets have desperately attempted to discredit the Escapee Program and have demanded in the United Nations that it be terminated. They also seek vigorously to discredit the program behind the Iron Curtain through propaganda to the enslaved populations that persons who escape are denied assistance by the U.S. and are forcibly repatriated. This goal is of critical importance to the Soviets because they are aware that in the event of hostilities sizeable desertions to the West from the ranks of Soviet and satellite armies may well take place if it is generally known that the West provides asylum and stands opposed to forcible repatriation. The achievements of the Escapee Program, which inevitably become known behind the Iron Curtain, give a lie to Soviet propaganda in this respect and demonstrate concretely that asylum in the free countries is available and that forcible repatriation will not occur.

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An obstacle to the effective carrying out of the Escapee Program has been the discrimination resulting from the exclusion of Yugoslav refugees from eligibility for its services. This exclusion is a result of the wording of the Kersten Amendment which does not cover Yugoslavs. The Administration's proposed amendments to the Mutual Security Act include an amendment to the Kersten Amendment (Sec. 602 of the Administration's Bill) which do not, however, provide for extension of eligibility to Yugoslavs. [Rather, it is desired to provide for assistance to them under Section 513(b) of the recommended Act which gives the President authority to utilize up to \$100,000,000 when such use is important to the security of the U.S.]

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In deciding to extend assistance to Yugoslavs, the Administration considers that continued exclusion of refugees from Communist Yugoslavia (who are inevitably a part of the anti-Communist escapee population in European countries of first asylum) not only endangers the effective operation of the Escapee Program itself, but will continue to engender political repercussions prejudicing the most effective implementation of our policies toward Yugoslavia. The Administration believes that while giving such material support as is necessary to maintain the defense potential of the Tito regime, the U.S. should not take actions inconsistent with its disapproval of those aspects of the Communist dictatorship which

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deprive Yugoslav citizens of their fundamental human rights. The exclusion of Yugoslav escapees from U.S. assistance is inconsistent with this position, and raises both political and administrative questions vis-a-vis the governments of the countries of first asylum which have basic control of the handling of escapees within these countries and which are not in sympathy with efforts designed to segregate and discriminate against any one category of anti-Communist escapees. Moreover, the American voluntary agencies which actually implement the program through operations carried out under contracts with the Escapee Program have almost without exception repeatedly protested the exclusion of Yugoslavs.

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In arriving at the foregoing decision, the Administration also took into account the importance of administering assistance to Yugoslav escapees in a manner which will not prejudice certain U.S. programs relating to Yugoslavia.\* Accordingly, it is stressed that no publicity will be given to assistance in behalf of Yugoslav escapees and no specific mention will be made of Yugoslavia in any enabling legislation. Moreover, no reference will be made to Yugoslav escapees in the covert or overt exploitation of the results of the Escapee Program, which was developed for the purpose of facilitating U.S. psychological, political and intelligence programs directed against the Soviet and satellite governments. [ It was felt that the provision of authority for assistance to Yugoslavs under the Kersten Amendment, even without mentioning Yugoslavs or Yugoslavia specifically, might prejudice the foregoing objectives. Therefore it was considered essential to provide for this authority under a different section of the Mutual Security Act.]

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