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SR/2-B-61-372

14 September 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, SR/2

SUBJECT : Contact Report - AEKILLO/2

1. On 28 August 1961 [redacted] telephoned AEKILLO/2 to arrange a meeting for 30 August 1961. AEKILLO/2 stated that he would be available to meet the undersigned at any time during the day. At approximately 1000 hours on 30 August the Case Officer called Subject at his office, Committee for a Free Latvia, 29 W. 57th Street, New York, N.Y., Plaza 3-8570 requesting him to come to the lobby of the Park-Sheraton Hotel, 7th Avenue and 55th Street at 1100 hours. The meeting was held as scheduled and both parties met and went immediately to Room 1254.

2. AEKILLO/2 turned over to the Case Officer the following materials:

a. April-June 1961 issues of Dzintenes Balss, the official publication of the Committee for Return to the Homeland, under Soviet Major General MIKHAILOV, mailed from East Berlin.

b. Copy of ACEN News, June-July 1961.

c. A review of events in Latvia, October 1960-July 1961 compiled by AEKILLO/2 (Attachment A). Among the highlights of this report are a discussion of the lagging Latvian agricultural situation, changes within the leadership of the Latvian Communist Party (earlier lists of CP officials submitted by AEKILLO/2 have been edited to reflect such changes); the unsatisfactory state of the Latvian Komsomol movement; appointment and dismissal of various government leaders; and Russification, terror, deportations, propaganda, etc. This review serves to underscore the need for monthly press reviews of the Soviet Latvian and Latvian emigre press. Although [redacted] in the past has been assigned the task to provide the Latvian desk with similar material, he has not done so through lack of initiative and self-improvement in

SECRET

SECRET

SR/2-B-61-372

Page 2

writing English. AEKIL0/2's performance in compiling this overt information as part of his duties as Chairman for the Committee for a Free Latvia underlines the wisdom of SR/2/Baltic in paying him a \$200 per quarter salary for such materials among other services. It is recommended that this report be reproduced for future REDSKIN training as general background reading on the current economic, political and social picture in Latvia.

d. List of former Latvian Army officers now residing in Europe (Attachment B). Names marked with a red asterisk are individuals known personally to AEKIL0/2. Provided there is a lessening of tensions between the USSR and USA during the next 12 months some serious consideration should be given to sending AEKIL0/2 to Europe on a trip ostensibly on behalf of Daugavas Venagi and the Committee for a Free Latvia. AEKIL0/2 with his wide range of contacts among the Latvian immigration is eminently suited to establish rapport with former Latvian army and emigre colleagues who would be disposed to speak rather frankly with him. Like dropping a seine in a school of fish we might come up only with minnows but then again we might net some larger fish of operational interest. The Latvian emigres know more than they will admit during visits by occasional Latvian speaking KUBARK staffers who are practically non-existent at this time overseas.

f. List of Latvian "youth" in Canada and the USA in the 25 to 40 year age bracket whom AEKIL0/2 regards as best suited for REDSKIN travel, spotting or other operational needs (Attachment F). Names marked with a red asterisk are individuals known personally to AEKIL0/2. Through his frequent trips to Canada AEKIL0/2 is well acquainted there especially in Toronto. The need for exploiting the Latvian potential in Canada still exists. Recent "second thoughts" from FI Staff to Case Officer John Furfey about the feasibility of continuing REDSKIN operations with U.S. nationals serve to underline the requirement for a more concentrated effort to generate REDSKIN spotting and travel among our friends to the North. Although bearing in mind the restrictions and sensitivity of such an undertaking especially the "flap" potential we cannot sit idly by. Through careful tracing and investigation it is possible that AEKIL0/2 could meet one or more individuals in e.g. Buffalo, New York, and present them with a proposition as to how a good Canadian citizen and a good Latvian could aid his brethren inside. If the Latvian

SECRET

SECRET

SR/2-B-61-372
Page 3

Canadian accepts the idea then Alex ROMPOT (P) might be introduced into the meeting under a suitable cover story to continue the discussions. What has been suggested above is another possible channel to exploit the Latvians in Canada other than thru Laiks channel which is still in the hypothetical stage. On the premise that the operational climate for REDSKIN travel by U.S. nationals is already circumscribed and may be even further inhibited, SR/2/Baltic must be prepared to continue with third country nationals such as Canadians to cite one example.

g. Biographical sketches on two former Latvian Army officers residing in Riga whom AEKIL0/2 recommends as possible internal reporting sources (Attachments F and G). The individuals are respectively:

- 1) Peteris KVALBERGS
Avotu iela 6
St. Dzintari
Riga Jurmala, Latvia
- 2) Gustavs PRAUDINS
Tumes iela 1/1
Riga, Latvia

Traces will be run on these persons as to suitability for contact by a REDSKIN traveler.

3. In response to Case Officer's queries as to whether AEKIL0/2 could identify the surnames BARKANS (one of Case Officers was fnu BARKANS; also an was recruited by REDSOX agent AECAMBARO/2.) They may be identical, and VAIVODS (a Janis VAIVODS was also one of Case Officers) Subject stated that he had known two former officers in Latvia by the name of BARKANS. A Janis (?) BARKANS, DOB: c. 1906, POB: Latvia, had served in a Latvian Cavalry Regiment. He was a champion horseman. A fnu BARKANS, DOB: c. 1921, POB: Latvia, had served in the Latvian Legion. Both men were from the province of Latgale. With respect to the name VAIVODS, AEKIL0/2 could recall no one by that name except to state that it was a Latgalian name.

4. In an effort to gain an historical insight into pre-World War II Latvia and to establish the credibility of (a REDSKIN candidate) statements to and the undersigned regarding her father's death in 1937 in the USSR during the purges, AEKIL0/2 was questioned as to his knowledge of the history of that period especially as concerning Latvian citizens inside the USSR who

SECRET

SECRET

SR/2-B-61-372

Page 4

might have been liquidated by the Soviet authorities. According to AEKIL0/2 before 1918 the Latvian intelligentsia sent their sons and daughters to Russian universities, [] stated that her parents were educated in St. Petersburg) for their education. Many of these Latvians worked in Russia afterwards. After 1918, many Latvian people were repatriated to Latvia until 1925 at which time repatriation practically ceased. The Soviet Latvians remained in the USSR proper. Strained relations between the USSR and Latvia continued practically from the outset of the latter's independence. AEKIL0/2 allowed that the Latvian government did send some of its specialists to the USSR for study or official contacts, but he was not aware of private contracting by Latvian citizens with the USSR government. (AEKIL0/2 stated that her father, a civil engineer, and a Latvian citizen had taken his family to Pskov in the early 1930's where he was engaged in construction work.) Pskov according to AEKIL0/2 was the center of a large Latvian colony. There were a Latvian high school and an agricultural school in Pskov. Speculating as to why a Latvian family might leave their homeland and go to Pskov AEKIL0/2 stated that the father might have been a Communist, a leftist, a Latvian citizen on government business or an espionage agent. As a Communist he might have been exchanged with his family for a Latvian nationalist anxious to get out of the USSR. The CP in Latvia operating as Workers and Peasants Party was outlawed in the early thirties. Since Latvian Communists and leftists in Latvia could not be deported, they may have been encouraged to leave for the USSR. Eventually the Latvian Communists in the USSR were shot in considerable numbers. Among the prominent Latvian Communists were fnu ALKENIS, Commander of the Soviet Air Force, fnu EIDEMANIS, head of the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow, fnu BERZINS, Deputy Commander of Marshal BLUCHER in the Soviet Far East, and fnu STUCKA, USSR Minister of Justice.

During the 1920's and 1930's Latvia was a crossroads for espionage. AEKIL0/2 likened Riga to Berlin and Munich today as being a spy center for all of Europe. He recalled that the English, French, Swedish, German and Japanese intelligence services were quite active. Once he met two Japanese officers in Riga, names unknown, who were Latvian language students. Since the USSR was active in sending spies into Latvia, the Latvian service and probably the foreign IS recruited local people to send into the USSR. The Latvian border guards assisted in getting the agents into the USSR through the Latvian families living inside the USSR along the USSR-Latvian border. This activity was possible until the Soviet government ruthlessly cleared out many of the Latvians. AEKIL0/2 stated that it would be difficult in the absence of any records to accept or to deny the story of anyone's father being a Latvian citizen legitimately employed in the USSR and subsequently shot by the Soviets. When asked if the name BALODIS had ever figured in an espionage case in Latvia, AEKIL0/2 admitted no knowledge of same.

SECRET

SECRET

SR/2-B-61-372

Page 5

BALODIS is a common name he stated. AEKIL0/2 promised to query Valdemars ALPS, a former head of the Latvian IS, as to his recollections of any espionage cases involving Latvians especially centering on Pskov.

5. The undersigned paid AEKIL0/2 the sum of \$400 for services rendered during the period 1 January-30 June 1961. A receipt was signed in pseudonym Victor HALFOND and has been sent to finance. Approval of \$200 payments per quarter retroactive to 1 January 1961 had been obtained previously. AEKIL0/2 was advised that he must furnish a copy of his future income tax form to the Case Officer to show that monies paid during the previous calendar year have been declared for taxation.

6. AEKIL0/2 stated that V. J. ABOLINS, presumably a Soviet Latvian, has been selected as one of five economic counsellors in disarmament matters to assist the Secretary-General of the U.N. at the forthcoming session. ABOLINS is a member of the USSR Academy of Sciences and Vice-Director of the Academic Institute of Economy and International Relations. Traces will be run on this individual in anticipation of his arrival at the U.N. and possible REDCAP exploitation.

7. As preliminary steps to recruit [] the office manager of a Committee for a Free Latvia, to assist in producing a monthly press review of the Soviet Latvian and Latvian emigre press, the matter of a brief meeting with [] on the premises of the Committee for a Free Latvia was discussed with AEKIL0/2. At 1600 hours after other members had left the offices AEKIL0/2 agreed to call the Case Officer and invite him to look over the surroundings. Since the office staff does not report in the morning before 0930 normally AEKIL0/2 felt that a private meeting would be feasible by Case Officer notifying [] who was then on vacation at home to come in early. At 1630 hours the Case Officer visited AEKIL0/2. The layout of the three offices was such as to permit a private conversation in subdued tones. The report and the subsequent contact and recruitment of [] will be discussed separately. (See SR/2-B-61-373.)

8. The meeting at the Park-Sheraton Hotel adjourned at 1430 hours with the understanding that AEKIL0/2 would be prepared to join the Case Officer and [] on the following day if the recruitment of [] was successful.

9. Following the successful recruitment of [] on 31 August at the offices of the Committee for a Free Latvia the Case Officer revealed to [] that AEKIL0/2 was a contact of KUBARK as well. AEKIL0/2 and [] were invited to come to the Park-Sheraton Hotel, Room 1254, at 1100 hours for a further conference on the matter of compiling a monthly review of the Soviet Latvian and Latvian emigre press. The details of this discussion are set forth in the [] contact report. (See SR/2-B-61-373.) Both individuals arrived at the meeting site promptly. At the conclusion of the discussion AEKIL0/2 departed at 1415 hours. RAMANS remained for further debriefing.

SECRET

SECRET

SR/2-B-61-372
Page 6

10. The next meeting with AEKIL0/2 will be held on call sometime in October 1961. No surveillance was detected during the meetings on 30-31 August 1961.

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SECRET