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19 March 1947

TO: SC, ANZON
FROM: SC, FBM
SUBJECT: Defections

Reference is made to MGH-003-228 which contained your reactions to the ideas we had expressed in connection with the possible defection of Yurii REZCHIKOV. We realize that the comment made by the officer who wrote the original report was very noncommittal. On the other hand, there had been a very definite tendency, especially on the part of the Munich detachment, to consider practically everyone as either a possible double agent or a possible defection case. As you know, we had at various times objected to this approach since it is bound to influence not only the reporting but also the entire exploitation of CR leads, and operating techniques. We know that you agree that a much more detached attitude is necessary in order to get as many details as possible and eventually complete the broad picture of what foreign agents are doing. Somehow we think that intelligence officers are given to hurrying through their investigations and losing sight of the initial objective by having continuously in mind a final achievement of having a double agent or good defection case. These latter two alternatives we can expect in only a very few cases and, although obviously they are highly desirable and very satisfactory, they are the end which will be achieved very rarely at best.

With particular reference to your Par. 4, we would like to say that we do not believe that a former White Russian who considered it expedient to join the Soviet side, is ineligible for defection by virtue of that fact. We do believe, however, that it is probably not wise to consider every such case, of which there must be very many, as a target unless we know all the details, know of the work which the particular person has been doing, know of the success he has attained in that particular work and know that it would be worthwhile to defect him. There must be hundreds if not thousands of MVD officers within our reach and there can only be a very few who would really be in a position to contribute to our knowledge of the RIS and its ramifications. Since no procedures for taking care of defectors after they have been fully exploited have been set up, we must bear in mind the considerable worry we will have

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in trying to dispose of them. Even if it should eventually be possible to get to the point where we can get passports and transportation for them, we will have to reserve such operations for the cream. The Soviets are conducting the intelligence, or rather informant and low-level agent business, on such a wholesale business that it will at best take us a long time to separate the wheat from the chaff.

May we say incidentally that we feel that the reports as recently received from Heidelberg are infinitely superior to the type we used to get.

CC: LONDON

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