

21 November 1949

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SUBJECT: Meeting of the Joint Policy Committee for
Operation BGFRIEND

PARTICIPANTS: OPC: Mr. Wisner, []
Mr. Roosevelt, []

BRITISH: []

Meeting convened at 10:30 on 15 November in the Pentagon. Mr. Wisner opened the meeting by stating that we felt the time had come to enter into a re-examination of the Albanian operation with a view to deciding the extent to which we could continue with our present plans. He recited some of the current difficulties with which we are faced, including the poor quality of recruits obtained thus far, the base problem and serious security leaks which had occurred. He also mentioned the concern of the Department of State over the possibilities of our activities starting a chain reaction which might involve us in hostilities or at the very least seriously effect the precarious position of the present Yugoslav Government. Mr. Wisner then proposed that we jointly explore the possibility of utilizing other means such as psychological or economic warfare to accomplish our objectives with respect to Albania, pointing out that in any event the Committee could not be used for future para-military operations, and that with winter approaching we were in no position to mount operations in the near future. He then suggested that the foregoing proposition be explored and that after allowing time for the British to consult London, an additional meeting be held following which we could then enter upon consultations with Foreign Office and State Department representatives on the entire problem.

[] replied that the British position with respect to concern over this operation was fundamentally the same as ours and that the onset of winter should give us an opportunity to review our plans. He stated, however, that he had been instructed by London to confine himself in the present meeting to exploratory talks and that while he could examine the

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feasibility of economic and psychological warfare activities, London felt that the other questions mentioned by Mr. Wisner could best be discussed by [] and, accordingly, London proposed to send him to Washington for such talks on or about 26 November.

[] Mr. Wisner stated that it would be agreeable to us for [] to come to Washington for further discussions.

[] then resumed that another of the VALUABLE teams had recently arrived in Greece and that there was only one team reporting regularly by radio from inside Albania. He then inquired into the present status of the Base problem and was informed that there had been no further developments with respect to the German holding area.

[] then stated that the British were also worried about the security of the FIEND operation inasmuch as it was clear that the French, Italian, and Greek Intelligence Services were obviously well informed. He recognized that one of the chief sources of information available to other powers were the conversations and correspondence between the Albanians themselves. He stated that it is impossible to get them to maintain silence and, therefore, presented the question as to whether it might not be possible to cut out the political leaders and get directly at the rank and file. He stated that although British experience in the past had been that this was frequently impossible, we might explore this proposition in an effort to find a carefully developed formula under which the leaders might be generally informed so as to obtain their acquiescence but given no details of para-military operations.

Mr. Wisner agreed with this suggestion by []

[] then continued that it might be possible to keep the political leaders so busy with other activities that they could not take a hand in, or have full knowledge of operations. He stated, however, that in any event abandonment of clandestine operations is probably not necessary at this time as we are still only in the reconnaissance stage. He added that SI does not provide sufficient information on which to base decisions as to further action, and he, therefore, broached the question as to whether it was feasible or desirable to give up reconnaissance now.

Mr. Wisner replied this was not necessary if such operations can be conducted with security, but that our own contemplated operations were impracticable. He added he had been thinking of the idea of giving the Albanians the impression that our major interest did not lie in any attempt to overthrow the Hoxha Government.

[] replied that London would be very reluctant to stop the reconnaissance at this stage. He felt we should continue to acquire additional recruits and devise new methods for their use.

[] remarked that the latter was the main point.

Mr. Wisner agreed that we require the maximum intelligence and remarked that we should so govern our activities. He mentioned that the State Department felt our operations may have contributed to the withdrawal of guerrilla forces from Greece although he himself was skeptical of this view.

[] pointed out that the interrogation of the escaped VALUABLE agents is still forthcoming. He suggested the possibility of so-called "hit and run" operations; that is, the infiltration of agents followed by their rapid exfiltration to Greece, pointing out that such operations, if subject to highly skillful interrogation, might produce good results.

[] remarked that by this system it would be possible to bring out personnel as well.

Mr. Wisner stated that we are not opposed in principle to a continuation of the reconnaissance, but that we cannot continue on the basis of our present pattern of operations.

[] inquired into the possibility of use of the Committee for deception purposes.

Mr. Wisner replied that we could and should so use the Committee, but inquired as to the objective of our deception. He stated that an examination of this question showed that the Committee could most profitably be maintained and supported for propaganda purposes.

[] remarked that the Committee might be used for tactical deception only.

Mr. Wisner then inquired as to the Foreign Office view on Tito's situation, pointing out that the State Department was very concerned over this question.

[] stated that the Foreign Office was obviously also concerned but indicated that he was not in a position to discuss this question authoritatively.

Mr. Wisner referred to [] instructions for this meeting and stated they suggested an interest in broader avenues of attack to the Albanian problem, and inquired whether this meant that London was willing to broaden its approach to the problem beyond that contained in the "narrow charter" mentioned by [] when he was here in May.

[] replied in the affirmative adding that the limiting factor is, of course, the Foreign Office. As regards psychological warfare, the Foreign Office of course guides such activities and Broadway is merely the executive arm, but that in this case, there

was a certain action and reaction by means of which Broadway could sometimes influence the Foreign Office viewpoint. He stated that there is no charter for economic warfare as yet and that such activities had only been approved once in the past, in a very special case.

[] suggested that the joint nature of the operation may in fact persuade the Foreign Office to broaden the charter in this case.

[] inquired whether it would not be possible to use psychological warfare techniques for economic warfare purposes. He also inquired into the possibility of direct action against sea-borne commerce.

Mr. Wisner replied that there is another form of economic warfare; namely, to study the requirements and shortages of the Albanian Government and then interfere with their procurement at source.

A general discussion of this problem, however, elicited the conclusion that the bulk of Albanian procurement is from the Soviet bloc, and that interference would have to be during transport, such as transshipment at Trieste. The possibility of counterfeiting was mentioned.

[] inquired whether it would not be helpful to draw up a statement of what we know is available to the Soviets in the way of information as to our Albanian operations, on the basis of which we could then decide as to how much we care as to what they do actually know. He added that he sensed a difference of view on this last point between the British and ourselves.

There was a general discussion as to what information pertaining to our operation is available to the Soviets.

Mr. Wisner stated he thought such a statement would not be necessary although he would have no objection if someone wanted to devote the necessary time to do it. He then inquired whether there was in fact any difference in view on the seriousness of Soviet knowledge.

[] replied that he felt there was not, as the Foreign Office probably feels the same in this respect as the State Department. He pointed out, however, that the Satellite states have plenty of proof of British SIS operations, but in none of the trials to date in which espionage has been an issue were any genuine cases ever brought to light.

Mr. Wisner stated it is our impression that the British were always less concerned about the security implications of this operation and made reference to the initial plan for VALUABLE.

[] replied with a smile that the Foreign Office is always happier when there is no British mission in the country concerned.

[] inquired whether the British really favored the overthrow of the Albanian Government.

[] after some contemplation, stated he would ask London. He added, however, in the entire history of British foreign policy, this question had never been answered.

[] remarked that this is, in fact, the crucial aspect of the problem.

[] then inquired as to the U. S. view on this question.

Mr. Roosevelt stated that we have none; that our concern as evinced at this meeting was over ultimate eventualities.

Mr. Wisner then inquired whether we really mean what we say with regard to the overthrow of Hoxha.

[] pointed out in reply that the State Department and the Foreign Office will be faced with the implications of this question whether or not the overthrow of Hoxha comes about through our efforts or as a result of factors over which we have no control.

[] then enquired to what ends would economic and psychological warfare activities be directed.

Mr. Wisner replied they were to be directed against the regime.

[] then inquired whether this meant toward the overthrow of the regime.

Mr. Wisner replied that in point of fact the objective is not in question and that the purpose of the meeting was to bring the method under review.

[] remarked that surely the result is what will create the Soviet reaction and not the method.

[] replied that this was not our view; that a collapse through the intervention of armed force may provoke a reaction that economic collapse would not.

Mr. Wisner agreed with [] and cited the example of Italy, pointing out the difference in our own reaction to a loss of Italy through Communist victory in elections in contrast to its loss through invasion by the Red Army.

[] stated that he had discussed this question with [] in London and that [] view was that the Soviets would act against Yugoslavia if they wished, regardless of Albania, and would not be provoked into such action if they did not desire it.

Mr. Wisner concluded that we would like concrete proposals, views, and recommendations on alternative methods, and inquired as to a suitable date for the next meeting.

[] suggested an interval of about ten days, at which time
[] would have arrived.

Mr. Wisner replied that that would be agreeable but that if it appeared there was a large area of disagreement, he would like to know earlier. The question of State and Foreign Office representation at the next meeting was left open.

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Chief, Foreign Branch B, Area I