

3 November 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director, Plans

VIA: Chief of Operations

SUBJECT: Recent OBCFUS/VALHABIE Meeting in London

1. The agreed minutes of the OBCFUS/VALHABIE meeting held in London on 21-23 October have been pushed but not yet received at Headquarters. In addition to the minutes, which will be forwarded to you upon receipt, you may be interested in other pertinent details of the meeting as set forth below.

2. Probably the most important fact which developed in the course of the meeting was the obvious concern of the VALHABIE representatives — clearly reflecting a no less obvious concern on the part of the Foreign Office — that the U.S. was going too far and/or too fast in its desire to detach Albania from the Soviet orbit. Specifically, the Foreign Office directive (incorporated into the agreed minutes) under which VALHABIE is operating calls for a very slow and cautious approach to this problem and does not envisage any increase of VALHABIE activities in Albania during the coming year. It makes clear that VALHABIE is debarred by explicit Foreign Office policy from engaging in any substantial cold war activity against the Albanian regime. VALHABIE is also prohibited from giving its border-crossing teams a political brief and must limit this type of activity to intelligence collection; its political and psychological warfare effort is therefore limited to a few leaflets a year and to continued support of the HTNEIGH. At the moment VALHABIE is also debarred from carrying out article drops over Albania but it is hopeful that it may be able to have this ban lifted.

3. Perhaps the second most noticeable aspect of the meeting was the British desire to have things go smoothly and to avoid either embarrassing their guests or becoming involved in any serious disagreement with them. On the one hand this may be ascribed to the fact that VALHABIE was vulnerable to attack in some respects, and on the other to the fact that the OBCFUS position was pretty well known in advance, having been rather clearly and firmly outlined before the meeting, particularly with reference to the broadening and reorganization of HTNEIGH. Here, as in all other matters requiring agreement, the VALHABIE representatives showed a high degree of tolerance and tractability. Even in the case of the broadening of HTNEIGH, about which the VALHABIE representatives were something less than enthusiastic, they made no fight, contenting themselves with (1) asking a rather rhetorical question as to what would happen if the Balli Kombetar withdrew and (2) insisting strongly (on the only occasion during the meeting) that no "pre-1939 quislings" be included in the reorganized committee.

4. Discussion of the Yugoslav-dominated Prizren League and other Yugoslav activities respecting Albania did not give any indication that the British have any special agreement with the Yugoslavs with regard to Albania; they did observe that the hopes they held at the time of Tito's visit to London that the Yugoslavs would demonstrate a more reasonable position with respect to Albania had not been borne out by developments over the past six months.

5. As a whole the atmosphere of the talks and the attendant social activities was excellent. The GOCYUS team got the impression, both from the meetings and from the rather substantial effort made by the British representatives to keep their visitors entertained, that MI-6 attaches a certain amount of importance not so much to Albanian activities as to maintaining the collaboration with CIA which has hitherto existed on Albanian affairs and in making that collaboration as cordial as possible. It is felt that, in the British view, the investment in VALUABLE is justifiable not so much for any positive results that may eventuate, but also, and perhaps more immediately, in that it provides a window into American intentions and activities with regard to Albania.

[Chief, SE]

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