

VIA: Air Pouch
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DISPATCH NO. SGAA-10429
~~2663~~

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CLASSIFICATION

TO : Chief, SE . DATE: 16 June 1954

FROM : [] *1/2*

SUBJECT: GENERAL— OBOPUS/OBHUNT
SPECIFIC— Friday Mission Debriefing for 29 May - 1 June 1954 Infiltration

REF.: SGAA-10428 (KAPOK-2662), 16 June 1954

Headquarters Action Required: Decision on re-mounting of Friday Mission
Phase I

SYNOPSIS

- Team infiltrated 29 May
- RNDOLLAR attempted to contact AIPIGEON 30 May, failed as AIPIGEON not home
- Team challenged by two civilians just before second contact attempt 31 May
- Team exfiltrated early morning 1 June
- Identity team members and intent of mission probably not blown

Account of Developments

29 May 1954

- 2045 - Team leaves conducting detail and heads for border
- 2230 - Team penetrates thorn fence 1 1/2 meters high and 2 meters thick running parallel to the border 500 meters inside Albania
- 2330 - Team arrives at spring (R 410575) where they drink and fill water containers

30 May 1954

- 0245 - Team arrives at first hideout (R 436565) to remain throughout the day
- 2045 - Team leaves hideout for contact attempt
- 2300 - Team arrives at house. AIRBRED and AIKNAVE are deployed around the house and RNDOLLAR goes to kitchen window. Sees three of AIPIGEON's children playing by the light of one oil lantern. No one else at home
- 2315 - Team leaves house

31 May 1954

- 0200 - Team arrives at second hideout (R 439566) and remains there throughout the day
- 2045 - Team leaves hideout for contact attempt
- 2330 - Team arrives at point 100 meters NW of AIPIGEON's house and is challenged by two civilians. The following exchange occurs between RNDOLLAR and challengers:

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Challenger: "Who are you?"

RNDOLLAR: "We are people. What do you want? Turn around."

Challenger: "All right. We understand."

Team then leaves and AIKNAVE drops his hat in outskirts of town.

1 June 1954

0130 - Team arrives at spring (R 410575) and drinks water

0300 - Team crosses into Greece

Discussion

All team members were debriefed separately and asked to relate own story of the infiltration. When the stories were compared, two possible areas of fabrication became evident.

First, it appeared possible that RNDOLLAR had met AIPIGEON on 30 May, been rebuffed by him and arranged with him to stage the challenge for the following night to provide a reason for abandoning the project and thus preserve the family honor. This possibility was suggested by the mildness of the challenge, the story of three children playing unattended at 11 o'clock at night and the fact that RNDOLLAR reported seeing two men while AIKNAVE and AIRBRED saw only one man. In explanation of this last point the boys said that they were behind RNDOLLAR and that a building obscured the second man from view. The first two points could not be explained. In a largely inconclusive LCFLUTTER on RNDOLLAR run 9 June he responded favorably to questions surrounding these points.

Second, we found that while the stories roughly coincided from the time of infiltration until the completion of the first contact attempt, they contrasted on detail from the time the team reached their second hideout until the time it started its flight. Specifically, RNDOLLAR and AIKNAVE described their second hideout as being about as far from town as the first while AIRBRED claimed it was half-way between the first hideout and town. RNDOLLAR said he was sure the other two team members were seen by the challengers while AIRBRED claimed they could not have been seen. When confronted with the first discrepancy RNDOLLAR stated that AIRBRED was unfamiliar with the area and had a bad conception of direction and distance anyhow. In subsequent talks AIRBRED stated that he felt the challengers probably heard AIKNAVE and himself when the team left the area but was sure that they could not have been seen in the darkness. RNDOLLAR reacted unfavorably but inconclusively on questions regarding the second hideout during the LCFLUTTER. As questioning regarding the later stages of the trip yielded a convincing story and LCFLUTTER results were not conclusive, we are inclined to accept the entire story as substantially true. Furthermore, as the debriefing progressed it became evident that AIRBRED and AIKNAVE had retained but little knowledge of their recent adventure. Their conceptions of time and distance were particularly discouraging.

Although it would seem that the failure of this attempt to contact AIPIGEON is attributable largely to bad luck, i.e., AIPIGEON's absence from the house Sunday night and the discovery by civilians Monday night, there are other factors that contributed as well.

Possibly the most serious detriment to the team was the presence of AIKNAVE. He succeeded in losing the team at the border on the way in thus causing a day's delay. His unquenchable thirst contributed to the team's haste once in the country, he lost his way on the exfiltration and left evidence of the team's visit by dropping his cap. As his primary purpose to the team was that of a guide we cannot find cause for retaining his services any longer. Furthermore, RNDOLLAR would not need a guide in the future. In fairness to this boy we should state that his motivation and his attitude are admirable. We will always have a great deal more respect for the courageous and dedicated Albanians of the AIKNAVE variety, however incompetent, than we will for the so-called Balkan intellectuals.

In addition to AIKNAVE's inadequacy, RNDOLLAR's departure from plans for the operation in three instances may have contributed to the team's discovery.

RNDOLLAR attributes two of these instances to the water problem. He has hoped that he would find water in cavities in the rocks on (Identity 1) mountain and this hope proved to be unfounded. However, the team carried over a gallon of water which should have been ample supply for the trip with the exercise of any discipline. It seems that AIKNAVE and AIRBRED were incapable of controlling their thirst and therefore stopped at the spring to drink on the way in, against the better judgment of RNDOLLAR. That they insisted on stopping at the same spring again on their way out when only two hours from Greece attests to a dangerous and unreasonable craving. RNDOLLAR was not afflicted with this problem but both AIKNAVE and AIRBRED were. They had consumed their supply by Wednesday noon.

RNDOLLAR had planned to spend two days hiding on (Identity 1) before going to his brother's house to insure his secure approach. He discarded this precaution because of the water problem. He had also planned to approach from the East ~~down~~ of (Identity 1) as reported in C 7068, 10 May 1954. Because of the more arduous and thirst-inducing climbing required by this route he decided on the approach from the ~~South~~ ^{North}-West.

RNDOLLAR's third departure from the plan was that he had the two boys accompany him right to the yard of his brother's house. Although he had been briefed to make the first approach alone. RNDOLLAR explains that he ignored the briefing on this point because he felt it was more secure to have the boys at hand for protection. He was somewhat humiliated by the displeasure we expressed on this point but unconvinced of the validity of our arguments.

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The question of what could be deduced by the opposition regarding the purpose of the mission was carefully examined. AIKNAVE claims he recognized the voice of the challenger as that of Sado VELO, a distant relative of his, who is a Communist. Although we do not put much credence in this claim, we should assume that the challengers were Communists. Their passiveness suggests that they were unarmed and afraid to provoke the team or that they assumed the team to be a Communist patrol. There is little chance that any of the team members were recognized as the night was very dark, the encounter very brief and RNDOLLAR, the closest man to the challengers, was 15 meters distant. It is the opinion of the team that the challengers became aware of all three team members either because they were seen or heard by them. RNDOLLAR feels it is highly improbable that the challengers could deduce where the team was heading as there are too many alternative possibilities at the point they were stopped.

Conclusions

Although the absence of AIPIGEON from his house on 30 May is not encouraging, there is no reason to attach much significance to it. He was reported as being there by a refugee as of March 1954 (see SCAA-9492, 13 April 1954).

It seems most probable that the intent of the team to contact AIPIGEON was not blown.

We regard RNDOLLAR's decision to take his team with him to his brother's house as a serious breach of instructions. The seriousness of his disobedience is somewhat mitigated, however, by the fact that we have not attempted to control operations so thoroughly in the past. It was evident during the debriefing that RNDOLLAR was surprised by our displeasure at learning that he had not followed his briefing to the letter. There should be no question in his mind now that we will not tolerate free-wheeling. Whether or not he will take our position to heart remains to be seen. We rather feel that he will and that the severe tenor of this debriefing should curb him in the future.

We do not feel that AIRBRED and AIKNAVE made any useful contribution to the team. Although RNDOLLAR admits all their shortcomings, he is still intent on having "rifles" with him. He explains that his companions give him courage. It is entirely possible that RNDOLLAR, who has informed us he will be the leader of his area some day, would also like to impress his brother with his importance as manifested by a retinue. AIKNAVE will definitely be terminated and we are doing our utmost to convince RNDOLLAR he should go alone next time. He is adamant, we are inclined to permit him AIRBRED rather than to cancel the mission over this point.

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In light of the above and RNDOLLAR's willingness to try again, we recommend the remounting of FRIDAY Mission Phase I during the dark of the moon in July.



Attachment:
Identity 1 under separate cover

19 June 1954

Rmw ~~W~~
RMW/WFH/rs1

Distribution:

- 3 - Wash w/att under separate cover ✓
- 1 - Wash (Vital Documents) w/att under separate cover
- 1 - Chrono w/1 copy attachment
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SEPARATE COVER ATTACHMENT TO: SGAA 10429
██████████ 2663
Dated-16 June 1954

Identity I is: Saraqin Mountain

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