

VIA: AIR  
(SPECIFY AIR OR SEA POUCH)

DISPATCH NO. SGAA-7423  
KAPOK # 2204

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CLASSIFICATION

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DATE: DEC 10 1953

TO : Chief, SE  
Attn: [ ]  
FROM : Senior Representative, [ ] Isac

SUBJECT: GENERAL— OBOPUS

SPECIFIC— Security Review of Apple/2 - Part I

REF: SGAW-2835, KAPOK-249, 21 October 1953

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2007

1. This desk has been analysing the development of the Apple operation with a view to establishing its status for a substantial period of time. Ever since we received IN MESSAGE 81 from the team on 3 November 1952 stating that RNDOMINO had broken his sending fist, we have treated the team as "possibly controlled." Highlights of our intercourse with the team since that date are outlined below. The reception given our covert aircraft on 23 October 1953 has confirmed beyond any doubt that at least an element of this operation came under the control of host forces. Careful analysis by this desk fails to conclusively identify the time at which control was instigated. We hope that future intelligence regarding the activities of Apple Team will permit us to establish this point, as such knowledge may give us an insight into the methods of the opposition.

2. The following summary of the Apple operation serves only as a basis for comments in this paper. Careful analysis requires reference to the details of our wireless communications with the team.

a. The original Apple Team infiltrated Albania overland on 1 May 1952 for its operational area in the central part of the country. By the 15th of June two guides and a team member had exfiltrated because they were deemed unessential given the exigencies of survival. RNCERTAIN was delivered to the team by parachute on the 4th of August. He had been unable to infiltrate with the team as intended due to a heart attack he suffered on the border.

b. W/T communication with the team appears normal until 3 November 1952 when we received word that RNDOMINO, the W/T operator, had broken his hand. The case officer's challenge was sent on this contact and was not answered on contacts made 6, 12, 15, 18 and 24 November. Base asked the team for an answer to the message including the challenge in the 24 November contact and received a garbled reply on 27 November at which time the control challenge was sent again. In our 3 December contact with Apple the team claimed to have forgotten the content of our challenge message and asked it be repeated. The standard cryptographic negative control signal was omitted from the end of this message. Prior to this contact, on 29 November, the field had responded to our case officer control challenge repeated on 27 November with the control signal.

1 JUN 1959: *ejk*

c. RNCASTING was informed

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c. RNCASTING was informed of the substance of these exchanges and asked to provide us with further questions designed to determine the true status of the team. The two questions he proposed were transmitted to Apple on 12 December. In a contact the following day the team provided the correct answer to one of the questions (Where are AIRTIGHT's cufflinks) and ignored the other. It also expressed impatience with our queries. We were unable to contact the team at scheduled times on 15, 18, 21 and 24 December, but re-established contact on 27 December, when we stated our intention to infiltrate a radio operator to the team during the moon period 3 - 7 January 1953.

d. Reaction of Apple in the wireless exchanges outlined above are certainly suspect and serious consideration was given to denying the team further support at that time. The decision to resupply the team and send a wireless operator to it was taken largely on the basis of Apple's favorable reaction to one of RNCASTING's control challenges. Weather conditions prevented our infiltration of Throwoff/2, the W/T selected for this mission, until January 29, 1953. W/T traffic during the period prior to the resupply was routine. In his first message after infiltration, Throwoff/2 transmitted a one time negative control sentence in a message to base on 31 January and gave negative cryptographic control signals. On February 4th Apple informed us of an engagement they had with armed civilians in the D/Z vicinity on 31 January in which they killed one man while sustaining no casualties.

e. On 13 February, in response to instructions sent with Throwoff/2, Apple's leader announced his agreement to exfiltrate to report to RNCASTING and KUEARK. During this contact we informed Apple that a diversionary dummy drop would be made outside their zone of operation. This mission was successfully executed on 20 February. Between this contact and the contact in which we began arrangements for a body drop on 4 April our communications with the team were regular and inconclusive from the standpoint of determining control.

f. In arrangements for a resupply drop made during contacts on 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 April, the team accepted a D/Z proposed by base and prepared to receive our drop. Our delivery was postponed by prohibitive weather conditions and the team expressed concern over being forced to extend their stay in the drop area. Three agents and supplies were finally delivered on the night of 1 May to guide the leader to Greece. Apple acknowledged receiving these agents in a contact on 4 May and announced that one man had been hurt as the drop was inaccurate and he had fallen in a wooded area. No outstanding developments occurred in communications during this phase of the operation. Our covert plane made the 1 May body drop in three passes over the D/Z consuming 8 minutes time. This extraordinary procedure was dictated by the hesitation of the first agent in the stick on the first run over the drop area. The practice of multiple flights over a D/Z is recognized by operations and air support personnel alike as extremely hazardous from the standpoint of team security and may be a significant development in this operation.

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g. The Apple leader,

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g. The Apple leader, together with the three men delivered to assist him, and RNDOMINO were reported to have separated from RNCERTAIN and Throwoff/2 on 12 May to begin their exfiltration. Analysis of the W/T traffic which developed from this phase of the mission may be found in SGAA-5593, KAPOK-1889, 18 August 1953.

h. On 14 May base asked RNCERTAIN (herein after referred to as Apple/2) if he could receive a personnel drop between 27 May and 4 June. On 18 May Apple/2 confirmed its ability to receive bodies and asked for supplies. Our execution of the drop was delayed until 4 June and wireless communication with Apple occurred frequently during this period. On 26 May and 1 and 4 June Apple/2 emphasized the difficulty they were having in influencing friends to remain in the D/Z area for such a protracted period of time. Other than these comments, their traffic was exclusively devoted to drop arrangements. The three man Plum Tree Team and the leader of Orange Tree were dropped to Apple/2's D/Z on the night of 4 June. The covert crew reported they made an accurate drop at 700 feet above the D/Z. On 5 June Apple/2 stated in a special contact that the airplane was very high and that they were amazed that a complete drop was not made. In a subsequent contact on 10 June the team denied receiving any bodies or supplies and reported that firing had been heard in the drop area at dawn on the morning following the drop. A cryptographic challenge was sent in this contact and answered negatively on 13 June. On the 16th the field asked who had been dropped so it could have a clue as to where to search for the newly committed agents. Base's OUT message on the same day advises the field that further information on the parachutists would follow and asked what supplies Apple needed. On 19 June the field responded with a D/Z location and listing of required supplies. It was further stated that Apple's local contacts were losing confidence in the team due to the failure of the 4 June resupply mission and subsequent delays in sending needed supplies. Base sent the case officer control challenge during this contact and informed Apple that supplies were being prepared for delivery. The following day Apple responded to the challenge with a negative signal and said no word had been received regarding Orange and Plum. On the 25th of June the team informed base that the leader of Orange Team had sent word to them through relatives of the Apple/2 leader that he was in the Mirdite area. They stated they would attempt to make contact with him. They further requested a drop as soon as possible.

i. Our OUT message on 27 June gave drop dates which the field refused and asked for a two day postponement. Contacts on 28, 29 and 30 June and 1 and 2 July are concerned with arrangements for a drop. Apple is most insistent during this period about the displeasure of their friends and renounced any responsibility for losing them in the 30 June contact. On 5 July the team reported hearing the airplane dispatched on the night of 3 July to attempt a drop. The plane was forced to return without delivering its cargo, because of 7/3 cloud coverage over the target area. Contacts on 14, 20, 21 and 22 July set up another supply drop which was successfully completed on the night of the 22nd. On the 26th Apple advised that they had received only three of the five bundles and that the airplane had made a bad drop. After this the team missed five successive contacts, not reappearing until 13 August when it stated that the arms had been distributed and they were awaiting the return of the Apple/1 team leader.

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j. After missing a

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j. After missing a contact on 16 August the team reported on 19 August that regular contacts were impossible because of trouble with the radio and again asked for the return of the team leader. This message was partially garbled. Our OUT message on this date stated that unforeseen circumstances were complicating Zenel's return at that time. Apple failed to come up on scheduled contacts 22, 25 and 28 August and in a poor transmission on 31 August reiterated their difficulty establishing contact with base. We asked for a repeat of the garbled message sent 19 August. The following day Apple came up again with a request for new batteries because they claimed regular contacts were impossible without them. A negative cryptographic control signal was transmitted in this message. Base immediately responded with instructions for dates and location of a D/Z and asked if the team was able to exfiltrate.

k. Scheduled contacts were not kept by the team on 5, 8 and 11 September but on 14 September the team confirmed arrangements for the drop and again expressed concern about the absence of their leader. The following day we reiterated the resupply plan and informed the team that their leader could not return this season. On the 17th of September the team confirmed the resupply plan, specifically requested food and clothing for their return trip and gold to pay off contacts and agreed to exfiltrate. The 19 September contact comprised another confirmation of drop arrangements by the team and instructions from base on what to tell contacts about exfiltration. Two containers were dropped to the team that night. Apple came up on 22 September to announce receipt of the two containers and thanked the crew for a good drop.

l. After missing the scheduled contact on 23 September, Apple came up on schedule 26 September to inform us of the preparations they were making for their departure. Base advised Apple to get started before the advent of winter weather. On 29 September Apple announced it planned to begin its trek on 15 October, after making appropriate explanations to all contacts. On the first of October base asked Apple to make wireless contact daily during its exfiltration. Field had no traffic. On the 4th the team announced that its departure was causing despair among friends but that all was under control and asked if some friends could be brought out. Contacts on the 7th and 10th were missed but on the 13th Apple asked if three friends could accompany the team to base and pointed out that these men could guide them partway. The team stated its intention of leaving on the 22nd of October instead of the 15th as stated on 29 September, and asked for food and clothing for the three friends who were dressed badly. Base gave the team permission to bring two of three friends on the 14th of October and asked for their names. On the 16th Apple informed us that the friends were secure and named them stating that Zenel would know about them. It also asked for details of the drop plan. In an OUT message in this contact base pointed out that a drop would alert security forces in the area and asked for a D/Z, if the team felt the drop imperative. On the 17th of October base gave necessary reception instructions and sent the cryptographic control challenge. In the next scheduled contact on 22 October the team confirmed the resupply plan but postponed the time one day - to the 23rd of October because it claimed to be too far away from the D/Z to make it by the night of the 22nd. A negative response to our cryptographic control challenge was sent in that contact. The 23 October contact with

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Apple/2 is quoted below:

"IN 212. TONIGHT WE WILL AWAIT THE DROP AT D/Z I-1531 BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 21 UNTIL 23 LOCAL TIME. THE ZONE IS QUIET. OUT 140. AWAIT DROP TONIGHT 23 OCTOBER."

3. There are no less than six periods since 3 November 1952 which we know to have been critical to the security of the team, if it were not already controlled. These are the periods around resupply missions.

a. The first occurred January 30th 1953 when Throwoff/2 was infiltrated. The team reported 4 February that they had engaged in a battle with armed civilians on 31 January, the day after the drop. They could have been captured after sending this message. They missed the next scheduled contact on 7 February.

b. The second critical period we know of was around the 1 May body drop. Apple was on the air every day for a week prior to this drop and this unusual frequency of contacts may have been detected by host forces. The presence of the airplane for eight minutes over the D/Z has already been mentioned as possibly compromising the team. Apple reported patrol activity in the D/Z area on 6 May and this activity may have ultimately been successful. The overwhelming evidence of Apple/1's control, coupled with our current knowledge of Apple/2's control, contributes to the thesis that Apple/1 and 3 were apprehended before separating on 12 May.

c. Another critical period for Apple/2 surrounds the 4 June body drop. Eight W/T contacts were made with the team during the 10 days prior to this drop. On the day following, Apple reported firing in the D/Z area. It was at this time, too, that we were told the drop had not been complete. After missing two scheduled contacts Apple announced on 16 June that nothing had been received. This inconsistency may well have been the signal of control instigated between 5 and 16 June, perhaps as a result of security activity touched off by the drop.

d. The arrangements for a resupply drop made in the week of 26 June - 2 July may have fatally exposed the team. It was on the air every day that week and had reportedly assembled friends in the D/Z area to wait.

e. A fifth critical time occurred in the period around the 22 July resupply drop. After announcing on 26 July that three of the five containers had been found the team dropped out of sight for seventeen days missing five consecutive contacts. When it reappeared on 13 August, no explanation was offered. From the 26th of July to the 14th of September Apple only made four of its 13 scheduled contacts, all of which were short and sloppy. This marked deterioration in Apple's radio traffic may well have signalled control by host personnel unwilling to work the radio beyond the bare essential to keep us in the game, for fear of revealing the fact of control.

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f. The last critical

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f. The last critical time we can identify is during the 19 September re-supply mission.

These periods are only significant, of course, assuming the team was captured as a result of the extraordinary security activity we know is triggered by the appearance of an airplane flying low over a given area. They are the only ones we know to have been critical. We have no conclusive evidence that control was gained by such activity. The team could just as possibly have been betrayed by a contact or apprehended for some reason that had nothing to do with air support missions. Deduction from these data, therefore, is of very limited value.

4. An analysis of intelligence received about this operation from independent sources follows. We will be able to conjecture more profitably on this information. In addition, [ ] is making a study of the details of communications procedures with the object of attempting to determine when control was established.

7 December 1953

RMW  
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Distribution:

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