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During the past four months OPC has been in covert contact with an association of former German soldiers and officers headed up by Gen. Felix Steiner, overtly organized as the Schutabund Deutscher Soldaten (BdS). The BdS has confined its activities to functioning as a routine pressure group advocating military pensions, disability rights, and a more general recognition of the past and present honor of the German soldier. Intelligently led by well balanced individuals, it has successfully avoided entanglement with such organizations as the Bruderschaft, Rusty, etc. Based in Bavaria, it claims about forty kreis chapters with an average membership of around 100 individuals each. It is prepared to, and plans to expand fairly rapidly into the other Western laender whenever it is thought expedient or desirable. The organization is comprised, in the main, of ex-officers, and must be characterized as traditionalist, authoritarian and rightist, although it strongly denies Fascist or Nazi-ist tendencies. Its head, Felix Steiner, was during the war a four star Waffen SS General of good repute—not of the war criminal type. General Steiner, together with several senior associates, has suggested to us that there exists a serious need to prepare now for possible Soviet aggression against the West. He envisions two contingencies: (a) that circumstances may force a hasty mobilization of German auxiliaries, or (b) that West Germany may be overrun too quickly to permit such a mobilization, in which case an

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underground military organization should be left behind to harass Soviet lines of communication. In either case, Gen. Steiner believes that preparations should be made now that will usefully apply toward the solution of either problem. He regards this as an effort that should be made on the German side, with necessary covert authorization and support afforded by the Americans. In his own words: "....the Germans must create an underground selection and recruiting organization which is apart from national or occupation authorities, but which must be tolerated by them and empowered to operate generally in accordance with its own viewpoints."

Gen. Steiner and his associates (among others: Gen. Blumentritt, Lt. Gen. Körsemann, Lt. Gen. Krakow, Lt. Gen. Kneppel, Maj. Gen. Munzel, Maj. Gen. Dr. Bache, Maj. Gen. Sachsenheimer, Col. Joachim v. Bock, Col. Dr. Neuman, Col. v. Lauchert) propose to organize along fairly routine and sensible lines. There is no thought of cutting in at this time a large percentage of the members of the overt BdS; this latter organization will be rather a recruiting ground, or reservoir of already trained personnel to be utilized if and when the situation so requires. Their proposed first step is to extend their organization into all eleven laender; then into a geographically well distributed number of kreise throughout the GFR, with a nuclear group in each target kreis, a headquarters in each land, and

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a command, support and administrative headquarters at the top. Recruiting is to be done at the land level, complete personnel records (copies of which, of course, will be held by OPC) are to be kept, and a clear chain of command will be established.

The second phase, that of training and supply, may never be reached. The OPC arms caching program probably should be slanted toward the potential needs of the BdS, and W/T training will certainly be an early requirement. Direct military supply, or direct, on the ground guerilla training is not however a phase we plan to go into for some months if at all, and certainly not without further clearance. We are primarily interested in the task of organization, of preparing to utilize Steiner's group if it becomes necessary; not in putting him in business now.

Control of the Steiner group may become a problem. We will hold, of course, the financial and supply string, and are convinced that we will at all times possess an accurate roster of all individuals involved. The group may, however, decide to attempt to exercise pressure on the political authority as occupation controls are relaxed, and against this contingency we are not completely prepared. It can be argued, however, that pressure of this type will be applied to any future German government whether we are or are not in touch with the particular pressure group,

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and that, accordingly, it is better from the standpoint of U.S. interest to be in a position of influence than to be informed but on the outside.

On balance, weighing (a) the disadvantages of associating covertly at the birth of what might develop into a new Black Reichwehr against (b) the advantages of bringing into being a serious para-military body that may be of some assistance in time of war, we recommend that OPC continue with this project, and exploit General Steiner's capabilities to the fullest.

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