

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

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TO : Projects Review Committee

DATE: 25 May 1948

FROM :

SUBJECT: Survey of Captured Documents Collections in Germany

1. The value of German documents as a source of basic intelligence information on the USSR has been established. Foreign Documents Branch translations and abstracts of German data on Russian industry, transport, topography, natural resources, and other subjects are regarded by ORE and the IAC agencies as of the highest value. Compilations of German information, such as the Industrial Card File, which is largely based on captured documents, are regarded as indispensable.

2. As indicated in the attached memo from Chief, FDB, repositories and collections in Germany still contain thousands of tons of documents which have been held in the theater by agencies such as Military Government, War Crimes Commission, and various intelligence and counter-intelligence organizations for their own purposes. Five hundred tons of documents are held in Berlin alone, of which only some 15 tons are now earmarked for shipment to the U.S. Few of the repositories have been adequately screened for documents or collections documents of basic intelligence value, with the result that much of the material currently being received in the U.S. is of low grade, and many valuable documents are still in Germany, unrecognized and unexploited for intelligence information.

3. Final disposition of these documents and liquidation of theater repositories has been under consideration by the Department of the Army for some time, but ^{developed into} ~~became~~ an acute problem requiring immediate action during the recent US/USSR crisis in Berlin. Emergency plans for

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evacuation and/or destruction of captured documents are outlined in the attached State Department and Army cables. (Enclosures 1-3 to Memo from Chief, FDB).

4. In view of the responsibility of CIA for the ^{intelligence} exploitation of German documents, the possible loss or destruction of valuable documents in Germany, and the imperative need for a coordinated program for the sorting and return of certain categories of documents to the U. S., it is proposed that a CIA screening team be sent to Germany and Austria as soon as possible. Informal investigation by the Intelligence Division, Department of the Army, has disclosed the facts that the Departments of the Navy and Air Force have no interest in the captured documents remaining in Germany; that the Departments of State and the Army have considerable interest in these documents, but are willing to let CIA represent them insofar as the selection and return of documents of intelligence value is concerned; and that CIA is the only agency which can provide a screening team with adequate qualifications in regard to language ability, documents experience, and familiarity with IAC intelligence requirements.

5. The proposed project would involve the following:

- a. Dispatch of the Chief, FDB, and two subordinates to Germany and Austria for a period of approximately 60 days. (No additional personnel required). Urgency of project is indicated in Para. 3 above.
- b. Vouchered funds are recommended, since project will not be highly classified.
- c. Maximum estimated cost of project would be approximately

\$4,000.00. Cost per person for maximum stay of 60 days, including

could be reduced by using U.S. Army transport service in lieu of commercial air transport.

- (d) There is no necessity for other agency support, since implementation of project is considered feasible for CIA. Concurrence by the Department of the Army is necessary, and representatives of the Intelligence Division have informally indicated their approval and strong support of the project as proposed.
- (e) Owing to the specialized nature of the project and the fact that it falls within the limitations of functions already assigned to FDB, concurrence of other CIA Offices is not deemed necessary.