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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

25X1

COUNTRY Yugoslavia

DATE:

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SUBJECT The "Spanish Group" in Yugoslav
Military and Political Circles

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SUPPLEMENT

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STATE	WAR	NAVY	JUSTICE	R & E	C & D						

- 25X1 1. There is today in the Yugoslav Government a so-called Spanish Group within
25X1 the Communist Party whose members took an active part in the Spanish Civil
War. The following members of this group hold high political positions in
the Government:

Josip Broz-Tito
Marko Oreshovich (region of Lika)
Branko Krsmanovich (Serbia)
Todor Vijasnovich (Bosnia)
Ales Bebler (Slovenia)
Ivo Rukavina (Croatia)

2. The following generals who now occupy high official positions were officers
in the International Brigades during the Spanish war:

Koca Popovich
Peko Dapceovich
Ivan Gosnjak
Petar Drapsin (now deceased)
Milan Blagojevich
Stabko Simich
Sava Kovachevich

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3. In the present Yugoslav Army there are eleven generals who took active part
in the Spanish war. They represent a very powerful factor in the Army. After
them come the officers formerly in the Croat Army of Ante Pavelich. As Russian
prisoners in Stalingrad these Croatian officers formed the first units of
Tito's movement in Russia. The representative of this group is the commander
of Tito's personal guard, Colonel Marko Mesich, who as a Croat officer was
decorated in 1941 with the German Iron Cross with palms and was made, because
of his courage, commander of all Croat legions on the eastern front. He was
captured by the Russians on 2 February 1943, immediately after being posted
as commander for the battle of Stalingrad. In March 1944, with prisoners-of-
war from his Croat legions, he formed the "Yugoslav Army". With these units
Tito entered Rumania together with the Russians since he was at that time on
the Russian staff. This group of former Croat officers is most obedient because
all the officers had collaborated and fought with the Germans in the war.
4. Only five percent of the Royal Yugoslav Army officers have been recruited in
Tito's army, and these only because of the need for specialists.

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5. The commander of the Yugoslav Air Force is General Frnja Piro, a former Colonel in Pavelich's army and commander of the pilot training school in Petrovaradin. Former officers of the Pavelich "Croat Air Force" make up the basis of the present Yugoslav Air Force. The political commissars are former workers from the Ikarus and Rogarski airplane factories. This is explained by the fact that the Spanish Group has no representatives in the Air Force, and all Royal Yugoslav Air Force personnel have emigrated.

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