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CONVERSATIONS WITH GENERAL DRO

SCHEDULE

1. General Dro arrived in Washington, D. C. on 8 January 1952, accompanied by:

Edward Sahagian Edwards
Office: 461 8th Avenue, New York City
Telephone: LA 4-9276
Home address: 2714 Netherland Avenue, New York City 63
Telephone: Kingsbridge 3-0558

K. Tandourjian
Home address: 93 Massachusetts Avenue, Highland Park,
Michigan
Telephone: Townsend 6-2717

Edwards is a member of the Executive Committee of the Tashnak Party for the USA and Canada. His capacity is that of assistant to Dr. Leon K. Baglian, advisor to the Party on military affairs.

Tandourjian is also a member of the Executive Committee. He is political advisor to the Party on U.S. and Canadian affairs.

2. Meetings were held as follows:

9 January : Shoreham Hotel, 1430 to 1730. Present were General Dro, Edwards, Tandourjian, and W. O. Hogue as U.S. representative,

10 January : Statler Hotel, 1300 to 1400. Present were same three members of the Tashnak Party, and representing the U.S. were Mr. Kermit Roosevelt, [] and W. O. Hogue. []

11 January : Statler Hotel, 1000 to 1245. Present were the three Tashnak leaders. and representing the U.S. were [] who was introduced as [] and W. O. Hogue. []

12 January : Shoreham Hotel, 1030 to 1400. Present were General Dro, Mr. Tandourjian, and representing the U. S. was W. O. Hogue.

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14 January : U. S. Department of State, Room 3203, 1030 to Present were the same 3 party representatives, Mr. Edwin Wright of the Department of State, and W. O. Hogue. The latter was compelled to leave the meeting at 1145 to keep another appointment.

14 January : Shoreham Hotel, 1500 to 1720. Present were the three Tashnak representatives and W. O. Hogue.

15 January : Shoreham Hotel, 1300 to 1520. Luncheon given by General Dro. Three Tashnak representatives were present and Mr. Kermit Roosevelt, [] as [] and W. O. Hogue. []

Note: [] was known throughout the discussions as [].

3. General Dro and his party scheduled their departure from Washington for 17 January. It is known that the three met socially on 9 January and 14 January with Colonel DEAN (fnu) of the Department of Defense. This had been anticipated and Colonel Dean had been briefed by []. A meeting was also scheduled (a second) with Mr. Edwin Wright of the Department of State. Mr. Wright had been briefed by Mr. Kermit Roosevelt.

SUMMARY

1. General Dro opened the conversations by stating that the Tashnak Party, at the meeting in Cairo, Egypt, of its executive organization in October 1951, decided that its policy should be collaboration with one of the major Western Powers -- preferably the United States. If this offer of collaboration was accepted, the British and French must be informed. He admitted that for the past several years the Tashnak Party had not been united on this question and that it had been in contact with the British and French governments as well as that of the United States. He also admitted that there had been some penetration of the Party on lower levels by the Communists but that this had been eliminated and the whole structure of the Party tightened and strengthened.

2. General Dro provided the following information about certain prominent Tashnaks who seemed to have disappeared from the Party (giving the impression in Washington that perhaps a split existed in the Party). The General said that no split existed.

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Vahan PAPAIZIAN -- This man is a loyal Tashnak at present living in Beirut. He is a close associate of General Dro and was present at the Cairo conference in October 1951.

Ruben Pasha Der MINASSIAN -- Deceased. Died in 1951.

Levon Pasha SHAGOYAN -- An active Party member who was present in Cairo for the conference of the Executive Committee.

Dr. Yervant KHATANASSIAN -- An active Party member who also attended the Cairo conference.

Ardashes APEGHIAN -- A loyal Party member but inactive. He is an intellectual who resides in Munich, Germany.

There is no split in the Tashnak Party according to General Dro and his two American associates.

3. The attitude of General Dro at the start of the talks may be summarized as: "Our Party has decided to cooperate with you. Now, what do you want us to do?" [] made it clear that our immediate objective was the obtaining of secret information about the Communist Party, the Soviet Union, and the Satellite Nations. If the Tashnak Party could assist us in this task, we would be interested in working closely with it.

4. As talks progressed it became clear that the Tashnak Party wished to get from the United States in the immediate future:

a. 250 firearms of assorted types for use in the Middle East in the containment of the Communists.

b. U. S. military assistance in the form of qualified trainers for training a para-military organization of 2000 young Party members.

c. Newsprint for hard-pressed Party-sponsored newspapers in the Middle East.

d. A United States promise to assist in the movement from Iran of 300 prominent Party members in the event of a Soviet invasion.

e. A United States blessing or U. S. encouragement to cooperate or affiliate with anti-Soviet minority groups comprised of people mainly from the Caucasus area.

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5. General Dro agreed to give full assistance to our chief immediate objective — covert intelligence. He declared himself committed in cross border operations to the principle of exfiltrating people from the Iron Curtain as a basic step in preparing people to infiltrate. This met full agreement.

6. General Dro was asked if the Tashnak Party could:

a. Provide five qualified members of the Party to be brought to the USA for comprehensive training as intelligence officers. These men, when trained, would serve as the core of a joint U. S.-Tashnak intelligence operation. They would also be used as trainers to develop other qualified Tashnaks in the field.

b. Provide up to 20 qualified Party members to be trained for sabotage and related activities.

c. Expand stay-behind W/T training with U.S. assistance.

d. Penetrate the Communist Parties of the Middle East and provide the U.S. with any secret information gained.

e. Continue the present joint operation in Iran.

f. Select and assign a full time, secure, French or English speaking Tashnak Party officer to work with an American official assigned to foster and facilitate joint Party-U.S. operations.

The General stated that the Party could and would do these things. With respect to Point e, it was learned from the General that the leaders of the Tashnak Party are greatly displeased with the state of the Teheran branch. This, according to Dro, will be remedied in the very near future following the return to that city of TIGRIS (Colonel Bagdassarian).

7. The Tashnak Party, through General Dro, offered to collaborate with the U.S. in cross-border operations from Greece. This was tabled for future examination. Collaboration on operations involving four tribes of Iran, not including the Kurds, was also offered. This also was tabled for future consideration.

8. It was made clear to the Tashnak Party representatives that as little had been accomplished in previous association, but that the U.S. was ready and willing to collaborate toward a limited objective. "The proof would be in the doing". The first step was the selection of the five trainees. Dro promised that these people would be selected and their personal history records ready for examination by mid-March.

9. [] explained to the Party representatives that it was not practical to provide sabotage and military training as separate functions. He told Dro that the men provided for sabotage training, 20 was the number most frequently mentioned, would be given

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basic military training along with the other so that they could assist in the organization of the 2000 young Tashnaks into a para-military body. General Dro arranged with [] to put a Tashnak party member who has had considerable military background in touch with the Major for possible training here in the U.S.

10. General Dro dwelt at considerable length on the subject of finances in the U.S.-Tashnak Party relationship. He explained that the Party expected to pay the salaries of all Party officials who took part in joint operations. The Party, however, was not financially able to provide itself with technical equipment, arms, etc. that might be required. Also, it would expect that travel funds for Party members brought to the United States for training would be provided by the U.S. as well as sufficient funds to compensate such trainees for such salaries as they might be earning while they are in training or working on joint projects. The General explained that such salaries would be low as many of his people hardly earned \$75 U.S. a month. The General was informed that it was not intended that a financial burden should be placed on the Party in the prosecution of joint operations.

11. With respect to the requests made by the Tashnak Party representatives (see para 4) the following positions were taken by the U.S. and explained in details:

a. Every effort would be made to provide the Party with 250 assorted firearms and ammunition in small quantities. An attempt would be made to deliver these to the Middle East so that approximately 70 reached Iran, 70 to Syria and the balance of 110 to Lebanon. Those shipped to Lebanon would include a few hunting rifles if possible.

b. The Tashnak Party members selected for sabotage training would be given basic military training so that they could assist in organizing and training 2000 young Tashnaks along the lines desired by the Party.

c. No assistance would be given in the procurement of newsprint until a detailed study is made of the effectiveness of the Tashnak press in the Middle East.

d. Upon delivery of the names and addresses of the 300 prominent Tashnaks in Iran whom it is desired to move in time of war, the U.S. will consider the inclusion of them in an over-all list of anti-Communists in Iran who will be evacuated if possible by U.S. facilities.

e. The association or affiliation of the Tashnak Party with other anti-Soviet groups is a Party matter which the U.S. has no desire at this time to influence one way or another.

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Another Tashnak Party request was that the U.S. inform the British that it was collaborating solely with the United States and therefore could not consider operational activities with the British. General Dro was told by Mr. Roosevelt that action would be taken on this subject. However, vis-a-vis the French, General Dro was informed that the Party would have to chart its own course of action.

A minor request was the procurement of a small number of standard cameras for use by selected Party members in photographing strategic areas of Syria and Lebanon and Iron Curtain installations and personnel. As such equipment can be bought normally in Beirut, General Dro was informed that it might be possible to allocate a sum sufficient to buy a dozen cameras. The money would be given to him and he would arrange the manner of handling the purchases.

(Note: [] feels that after the Tashnak Party has shown its willingness to cooperate by providing the initial five Party members for training, \$800 might be made available to General Dro for the purchase of a dozen medium cost cameras.)

12. General Dro and his companions were impressed by the fact that [] was ready to proceed to the Middle East in the near future as the U.S. official who would actually direct joint operations in Lebanon and Syria. [] is known to them for the time being as []. They were informed that his cover must be protected by those members of the Party who would know of his U.S. government connection.

13. The discussion of political affairs concerning the Tashnak Party was held at the Department of State with Mr. Edwin M. Wright, an old acquaintance of General Dro. This consisted of an exchange of opinions between the two men. The General was disappointed that he could get no official statement of U.S. Government interest in the re-constitution of an independent Armenian homeland after the fall of the Soviet Union. He was pleased, however, to be reassured that the U.S. Government continued to favor a policy of self-determination on the part of minority groups.

General Dro provided the following two names as leaders of the Tashnak Party in Greece:

Mr. A. PARAGHANIAN
Journal Asador
Rue Nikis, No. 48
Athens, Greece

Dr. A. APRAHANIAN
Avenue Vassilissolga, No. 102
Salonika, Greece

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POLITICAL QUESTIONS OF MUTUAL INTEREST

1. The participation of the Tashnag Party in the struggle against the Communists.
 2. The cooperation of the Tashnag Party with other anti-communist groupings whenever desired by the U.S.
(Here must be considered the cooperation with the other Caucasian peoples.)
 3. The opinion of General Dro on the present, and if possible on the future, methods of action of the Soviets and Communists in the Middle East.
 4. The Armenian interests in present Armenia and bordering occupied Armenian lands, which are to be annexed to the Armenian National Fatherland. The general must be ready to discuss frontiers.
 5. Willingness or unwillingness of the Armenians to cooperate with Turkey in case the Soviet forces attack Turkey. It is expected from the General to give not only the point of view of the Tashnags but also of the other Armenians.
 6. The protection of the Armenians in the Soviet Armenia when the Allied forces attack the Soviet Union, having as vanguard the Turkish army.
 7. The protection of the anti-communist Armenians in Iran in case the Soviet armies enter Iran.
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POLITICAL QUESTION OF MUTUAL INTEREST

1. Our participation can be summarized in the following points; we can help

- a) In the anti-communist propaganda through our extensive press.
- b) By leading the Armenian people along the anti-communist line.
- c) On the Kurdish front.
- d) In the organization of the Trans-Caucasian peoples, in the anti-Soviet front.
- e) In the organization of the peoples of Russian origin in the anti-Soviet front.
- f) In the Arab world, as an active anti-communist force.

2. The Tashnag Party has decided to cooperate with them, on condition that, in this connection the independence of Armenia must not be denied.

Concerning our cooperation with the Caucasian peoples, this becomes real and gives good results if;

- a) Each one of the Caucasian peoples organizes a National Committee, where all its anti-communist parties are represented.
- b) Out of these National Committees, on the basis of equality must be organized the Political Central Committee of the Trans-Caucasian peoples. This Central Committee must be the only organization which is to lead the anti-communist struggle of all the Trans-Caucasian peoples.
- c) The Central Committee does not forecast the nature of the state government of each nation. This should be left to the will of each freed nation, after the war. However, the independence and sovereignty of the Caucasians must be recognized by the Central Committee on the principle that Caucasias is to the Caucasians.
- d) The Central Committee must not have the right to solve the debatable questions which might exist between the Trans-Caucasian peoples. These questions must be solved out after the war, by arbitration and peaceful means.

3. The nature and course of the coming war is an important factor which will decide the methods of action of the Soviets in the Middle East.

In all circumstances, the Soviets, always and everywhere will try to create civil wars, and to reach this end they are going to make good use of internal fifth columns. In every country they will try to utilize clerical and ethnical elements, the organization of the Moslem Brothers, as well as students, workmen, and peasants.

4. The Armenian interests are summarized in the slogan:
"A Free, Independent, and Unified Armenia."

By Unified Armenia, as a basis, we understand to have a sufficiently large territory of Fatherland to hold all the dispersed Armenians and to face their economical needs.

5. We answer to this question with the understanding that the Soviets attack Turkey alone.

- a) If in the course of such an attack the population of Soviet Armenia revolts against the Soviet regime, this cooperation will be created by itself, as it occurred during the Revolution of February 1921.
- b) If no revolution takes place in Armenia, the Tashnag Party will remain friendly neutral towards Turkey.
- c) We presume that the other Armenian Parties are going to adopt the same neutrality, except the Armenian communists, who if in possibility, are going to help the Soviets.

6.

- a) In the armies entering the Soviet Armenia must be included a vanguard troop of the Allied forces. This will give confidence to the native Armenians and will diminish their resistance.
- b) The occupied territories, as long as the occupation lasts, must be put under the administration of the Allies.

7. It is possible that in the event of a war, Northern Iran may immediately be occupied, and anti-communists, especially the Tashnags, may be endangered of extermination. We have to, as far as possible, forecast as from now the places where these people may be gathered at once, in time of such danger, and from thence may be transferred by your means and aid, for their eventual utilisation.
