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SOURCE Non US-Government intelligence network which has been operating for several years. The evaluation above was ascribed by the network to the following material.

A high-ranking officer of the former German General Staff submitted two documents on the life history of the SS leader Skorzeny, and the abduction of Mussolini from captivity. During World War II, source was in a position to receive authentic data; thus the attached information may be considered reliable.

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Enclosure A: Liberation of Mussolini
 B: Skorzeny - Biographic Notes

EXEMPTIONS Section 3(b)
 (2)(A) Privacy
 (2)(B) Methods/Sources
 (2)(G) Foreign Relations

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File (Person)
SKORZENY

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Factual Report Concerning Mussolini's Liberation

1. On 11 Sept 43, the commander of the First Parachute Training Battalion, Major Harald Mors, received a message in Frascati from the headquarters of General Student, ordering him to report to the latter immediately.
2. Following his arrival, General Student discussed with Major Mors the following mission and details:
 - (a) Mussolini was to be liberated on 12 September 1943. Place: Hotel "Gran Sasso". Time: 0700 hours.
 - (b) For the past several weeks SS-Lieutenant-Colonel Skorzeny had had the special mission of determining Mussolini's whereabouts. The mission as a whole had been entrusted to him (General Student) by Hitler.
 - (c) Skorzeny had very cleverly found out where Mussolini was. His mission was thus accomplished.
 - (d) The First Parachute training Battalion was to be committed; one company was to be dropped in the valley of the Gran Sasso massif, and the mountain massif (difference in elevation of 1000 meters) was to be taken in an attack by the other companies which were to be marched up by land.
 - (e) Major Mors made a counter-proposal: a surprise landing of one company by glider in the Gran Sasso, and support by the other companies, which would be marched up by land to the valley entrance and would then make surprise use of the cable railroad.
 - (f) Major Mors's proposal was accepted.
3. During the period of preparation, on the morning of 12 September, Skorzeny reported to General Student and asked permission to take part in the operation. General Student agreed, and placed Skorzeny, as well as 17 other SS personnel, for whom Skorzeny had also requested permission, under Major Mors.
4. Skorzeny reported to Major Mors, who, in accordance with General Student's order, treated him as a subordinate visitor. Note: Any other interpretation is incorrect, for General Student had taken precautions against putting 478 parachutists under Skorzeny.
5. Events on 12 September:
 - (a) Shortly after 1400 hours the approaching ground staff observed the gliders over the Gran Sasso.
 - (b) At about 1416 hours the ground staff occupied the valley station.
 - (c) At 1417 hours the flight staff reported by radio to Major Mors that the liberation had taken place.
 - (d) Some of the ground troops reached the mountain hotel by means of the cable railway.
 - (e) Major Mors reported to Mussolini.
 - (f) Skorzeny was already at this time playing the role of liberator and had consequently angered the officers of the parachute troops.
 - (g) It was determined that Skorzeny had himself endangered the operation by having his pilot dive, in spite of the fact that he was only a guest on the flight.
6. Skorzeny flew with Mussolini to East Prussia, arriving on 13 September. He received the Knight's Cross, and on 14 September he spoke over the Deutschlandsender (radio), completely distorting the entire event. Note: General Student had asked Skorzeny to accompany Mussolini so that he would not have to spare a parachute troop officer.

Biographic Notes on Skorzeny

I. Before World War II

1. Born 12 Jun 08, in Austria
2. Student at the Institutes of Technology of Vienna and Graz
3. Assistant in Koeln-Deutz. Also worked for the Linz streetcar line and in a garage in Vienna.
4. Joined the National-Socialist Party in 1930.

II. During World War II

1. Drafted into the Luftwaffe in 1939
2. Transferred to the Waffen-SS in 1940
3. SS-First-Lieutenant /sic-probably should have read "Lieutenant Colonel" in Office VI (Foreign Intelligence Service of the Reich Security Office) in April 1943
4. Special mission in about August 1943, to determine Mussolini's whereabouts; at this time he was assigned under General Student.
5. Safeguarding of Horthy, Junior, in Budapest in October 1944.
6. Special operation during the German Ardennes offensive against the Maas bridges at the end of 1944 (operation did not succeed)
7. In the so-called Alpine Fortress in April 1945.
8. Reported voluntarily to the Fifth US Regiment in Salzburg on 15 May 1945.

III. Since 1945

1. Spent time in a number of prisons and internee camps.
2. While in one internee camp, presumably Dachau, established contact with Richard Hanser, a member of the Psychological Warfare Section of the American Twelfth Army Group, and also a contact for (or an employee of) the American magazine True. Skorzeny's experiences during World War II, especially his supposed liberation of Mussolini, were published in this magazine in August 1948. This collaboration with Mr. Hanser was presumably the original basis for Skorzeny's false popularity in foreign countries since the war, since with the support of the American newspapers these disclosures succeeded in getting into the world press, and thus attained a sort of documentary value.
3. Escape from the Darmstadt Internee and Work Camp on 26 July 1948.
4. Skorzeny's whereabouts up to the middle of 1949 remained unknown. According to one unconfirmed story he is said to have been in Argentina, working for the newspaper "Der Weg" (Der Spiegel, No 29, 14 July 1949).
5. In Munich in mid-1949. Discussion with a Syrian representative concerning the recruitment of German specialists.
6. In Spain the end of 1949.
7. In Paris, France, and in the Pyrenees in March 1950.
8. Visited in Madrid in August and September 1950. Allowed himself to be feted there as Mussolini's liberator. Had dealings with a number of political and military personalities concerning the transfer of 200,000 able-bodied German men from West Germany in case of a Soviet attack. Final plan for seating up German units in Spain. The impressions he created in the Spanish capital were varied, but not unfavorable, since when he paid his respects, he was armed with references from a number of supposed contacts, for example, General Guderian. In this connection, he had no qualms about making exaggerated claims about his collaboration with influential persons in West Germany.
9. In October 1950 he was in the Black Forest.
10. The end of 1950 he had a meeting with Dr. Hjalmar Schacht in Frankfurt. The subject of discussion was the transfer of industries to Spain (recently it has been learned that this plan is now concentrating on North Africa instead).
11. On 28 Dec 50 he had a conference with General Guderian and explained to him his plan for the transfer of 200,000 able-bodied Germans to Spain. At this time General Guderian believed, with reservations, that this plan might possibly have the support of the French, since Skorzeny had genuine passports which could have been obtained only with the assistance of the Allied authorities. Subsequently, Guderian repudiated all of Skorzeny's maneuvers.

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Enclosure B
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12. In January 1951 he was again in Madrid and published some very caustic articles in the newspaper "ABC" against the former German generals.
13. In February 1951 he again had a conference with General Guderian. During the course of this discussion he claimed that his former proposal for the transfer of able-bodied men was only a camouflage. Actually, he claimed, he had a mission from Allied offices to set up partisan and commando troops in West Germany. He also tried to influence General Guderian against General Speidel, by telling him lies about supposed agitation against Guderian by Speidel in Madrid.
14. The end of February 1951 Skorzeny visited General Speidel and claimed that General Guderian had made very uncomplimentary statements about him (General Speidel). At the same time, he offered some ideas concerning the formation of a German foreign legion and concerning the transfer of able-bodied men.
15. At about the same time (February 1951) he had a conference with SS-Lieutenant-General Hausser, and told him approximately what he had told Speidel and Guderian, at the same time having little to say that was complimentary to the two army generals. Hausser later expressed himself in a small circle of friends very critically concerning Skorzeny, saying that he was an unscrupulous and altogether worthless character.
16. In March 1951 Skorzeny was again in Madrid.

Note: There is no doubt that since about mid-1949 there have been contacts with US offices, presumably in military and political units. Otherwise the generous granting of visas would have been inconceivable.

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