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COUNTER INTELLIGENCE CORPS
ITALIAN FRONTIER CONTROL DETACHMENT
ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
APO 542 U.S. ARMY

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

TURIN SECTION
10 MAY 1945

SUBJECT: ITALO-FRENCH FRONTIER

RE: PRELIMINARY SITUATION REPORT

ON 10 MAY 1945, THIS AGENT INSPECTED THE CENTRAL SECTOR OF THE ITALO-FRENCH FRONTIER. FROM A VERBAL REPORT SUBMITTED TO THIS AGENT BY SPECIAL AGENTS LOUIS ELIOPULOS AND MILLARD CRON, AND AFTER A CONFERENCE WITH MAJOR HELM, S-3, 91ST CAV. RCN. SQ., THE FOLLOWING REPORT IS BEING SUBMITTED ON THE CENTRAL SECTOR OF THE ITALO-FRENCH FRONTIER, COVERING THE TRIANGLE FORMED BY MONT GENIS, TURIN AND MT. GRANERO (SOUTHWEST OF PINEROLO).

1. ELEMENTS OF THE 27TH, FRENCH ALPINE DIVISION, DURING THE GERMAN WITHDRAWAL FROM THE FRONTIER REGION, ENTERED ITALIAN TERRITORY AND OCCUPIED ALL TOWNS IN THE FRONTIER REGION AS FAR WEST AS AVIGLIANA ON THE ROAD FROM SUSANA TO TURIN. FRENCH TROOPS ENTERED THE OUTSKIRTS OF TURIN BUT THEY WERE FORCED TO WITHDRAW BY THE AMERICAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES. THEIR EASTERN-MOST PRESENT LOCATION IS AT AVIGLIANA.

2. ELEMENTS OF THE 91ST CAV. RCN. SQ., U.S. ARMY PROCEEDED THROUGH THE FRENCH LINES ACCORDING TO PLAN (DESPITE FRENCH PROTESTS) AND REACHED THE FRENCH FRONTIER AT CLAVIERES, MT. GENIS, AND MT. GENEVRE AND ESTABLISHED AN EFFECTIVE ROAD-BLOCK SYSTEM CONTROLLING ALL ROADS AND PASSES LEADING ACROSS INTO FRANCE.

3. THIS REGION WHICH INCLUDES PART OF THE MARITIME ALPS, THE COTTIANALPS, THE GRAIAN ALPS (AVG. HEIGHT 12,000 FT.), AND THE GRAN PARADISO (13,320 FT.) MAKES MOVEMENT DIFFICULT AND ALL TRAFFIC IS RESTRICTED TO COMPARATIVELY ISOLATED VALLEYS. BETWEEN THE CHISONE AND DORA RIPARIA RIVERS, SEVERAL ROADS RUN FROM TURIN INTO FRANCE. THE ROADS FROM PINEROLO, THROUGH THE VERY HIGH MOUNTAINS OF FENESTRELLIE AND SESTRIERIE JOIN THE ROAD TO CESANA TORINESE AND ARE NARROW AND DIFFICULT. THE JUNCTION IS THREE MILES FROM THE MONT GENEVRE PASS WHERE THE ROAD CROSSES THE FRONTIER AT JUST OVER 6,500 FT. AND ENTERS THE VALLEY OF THE RIVER DURANCE, LEADING TO BRIANCON. THE ROAD AND RAILROAD FOLLOW THE DORA RIPARIA FROM TURIN INTO FRANCE. AT SUSANA THE ROAD BRANCHES, ONE ROAD PROCEEDING NORTH OVER MT. GENIS PASS AT 6,500 FT. INTO FRANCE, AND THE OTHER ROAD CONTINUING THE WHOLE WAY UP THE RIVER VALLEY TO JOIN THE CHISONE ROAD. THE RAILROAD, HOWEVER, FOLLOWS THE TRIBUTARY VALLEY OF THE BARDONECCHIA AND THEN ENTERS THE

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FREJUS TUNNEL. THIS REGION IS MORE POPULATED THAN THOSE OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH.

BRIDGES OVER MANY OF THESE ROADS HAVE BEEN BLOWN UP, ROADS HAVE BEEN CUT AND THE ENTRANCE TO THE FREJUS TUNNEL HAS BEEN BLOCKED FOR TWO OR THREE KMS. BY SABOTAGE OR BY THE RETREATING GERMAN UNITS. ROAD TRAFFIC BECOMES DIFFICULT THROUGH THE VALLEYS. LATERAL AND LONGITUDINAL TRAFFIC OFF THE ROADS IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE DUE TO THE HEIGHT OF THE ALPS IN THIS REGION.

4. AMERICAN UNITS OF THE 91ST CAV. RCN. SQ. ARE EFFECTIVELY CONTROLLING ALL ROADS LEADING TO THE FRONTIER THROUGH A NET-WORK OF ROAD BLOCKS AND STRATEGICALLY LOCATED ARMORED VEHICLES AND TANKS. TANK UNITS ARE LOCATED AT CLAVIERES, CESANA, SUSA, MT. CENIS, BAR, LANZO AND CERES. AT THE LAST NAMED TOWNS THERE ARE NO FRENCH UNITS.

GOING FROM NORTH TO SOUTH, A MEDIUM TANK PLATOON, AND A PLATOON OF INFANTRY ARE LOCATED IN THE LANZO-CERES REGION CONTROLLING ALL TRAFFIC TO THE FRONTIER. THE ROADS LEADING TOWARDS THE FRONTIER COME TO A DEAD-END AT THE BASE OF THE STEEP-SLOPED ALPS AND ROAD TRAFFIC IS NON-EXISTANT.

IN THE MT. CENIS AREA ALL ROADS ARE CONTROLLED BY A RCN. TROOP, AN ASSAULT PLATOON, AND A LIGHT TANK PLATOON. HERE ROAD TRAFFIC IS LESS DIFFICULT THAN IN THE LANZO-CERES AREA.

IN THE CLAVIERES FRONTIER REGION ALL TRAFFIC IS UNDER EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF A RCN. TROOP, AN ASSAULT PLATOON, AND A LIGHT TANK PLATOON.

A MEDIUM TANK PLATOON IS LOCATED NORTH OF TURIN, AND A MEDIUM TANK PLATOON AND A PLATOON OF INFANTRY ARE LOCATED SOUTH OF TURIN.

AT PINEROLO, ON THE ROAD TO SALUZZO, A LIGHT TANK PLATOON COMMANDS TRAFFIC GOING SOUTH AND SOUTH-WEST.

NORTH OF THE CENTRAL SECTOR, ELEMENTS OF THE 1ST ARMORED DIVISION HAVE ESTABLISHED A NET-WORK OF ROAD BLOCKS WHICH REACHES NORTH TO THE SWISS FRONTIER AND EAST ALONG THIS FRONTIER TO AN UNDETERMINED POINT. (NO REPORT HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE AOSTA SECTION AS YET).

SOUTH OF THIS CENTRAL SECTOR, ELEMENTS OF THE 92ND DIVISION HAVE EFFECTED SIMILAR CONTROLS WHICH REACH TO VENTIMIGLIA ON THE RIVIERA. (NO REPORT HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM THIS SECTOR AS YET.).

5. THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES ARE NOT ABIDING BY AFHQ TRAVEL REGULATIONS, BUT HAVE SET UP THEIR OWN. FRENCH AUTHORITIES HAVE ALLOWED CIVILIANS WHO ARE IN POSSESSION OF AN "ORDRE DE MISSION" ISSUED BY THE "BUREAU DE SECURITE MILITAIRE" TO CROSS THE FRONTIER. THE DELICATE SITUATION WHICH EXISTS IS DUE TO DELIBERATE ACTION ON THE PART OF THE FRENCH TO RENDER OUR CONTROL INEFFECTIVE. OVER 4 MONTHS AGO, THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES AGREED TO THE CLOSURE OF THE FRONTIER, AND THE CONSEQUENT RE-OPENING OF CLAVIERES AND VENTIMIGLIA AS THE ONLY OFFICIAL CROSSING POINTS. AT PRESENT THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES ARE ALLOWING AND AIDING THE PASSAGE OF CIVILIANS INTO FRANCE. THE FRENCH ARE USING ANY CONVENIENT CROSSING POINT INDISCRIMINANTLY IN VIOLATION OF THEIR AGREEMENT.

WHEN CIVILIANS CARRYING AN "ORDRE DE MISSION" WERE STOPPED BY U.S. ARMY PATROLS AND TURNED BACK, THE FRENCH UNDERTOOK THE TRANSPORTING OF CIVILIANS IN FRENCH ARMY VEHICLES. U. S. ARMY AUTHORITIES HAVE DECIDED TO TURN BACK ALL CIVILIANS WHETHER THEY ARE BEING TRANSPORTED ON FRENCH ARMY VEHICLES OR NOT AND TO TURN THEM BACK. THIS DECISION WAS BROUGHT ABOUT WHEN FRENCH PATROLS STOPPED AND SEARCHED U.S. ARMY VEHICLES.

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(SPECIAL AGENT ELIOPULOS HAS GIVEN THIS AGENT A REPORT GIVEN TO HIM BY BSM CONCERNING TRAVEL REGULATIONS AS SET DOWN BY THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES. THIS REPORT AND A LIST OF PERSONS WHO CROSSED UNDER FRENCH SPONSERSHIP IN VIOLATION OF AFHQ TRAVEL REGULATIONS ARE INCLUDED. SEE INCLOSURES 1 AND 2 ATTACHED, ORIGINAL COPY IN FRENCH AND THE TRANSLATION OF SAME.)

OTHER INFORMATION:

1. THE ITALIAN CIVILIAN POPULATION RESENTS THE PRESENCE OF THE FRENCH TROOPS IN THE AREA AND FEARS THAT IT IS PRELIMINARY TO THE FRENCH ANNEXATION OF THE TERRITORY BY THE FRENCH
2. THE ITALIAN POPULATION IS EXTREMELY FRIENDLY TO THE AMERICAN TROOPS IN THE AREA.
3. THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES HAVE REQUESTED THROUGH THIS ORGANIZATION THAT AN AMG SECTION BE SENT TO SUSAS AND THE OTHER BORDER TOWNS TO ORGANIZE THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD WELCOME ALLIED COLLABORATION.
4. THE FRENCH ARE CONDUCTING A PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN WITH LITTLE SUCCESS. FRENCH MAQUIS IRREGULARS HAVE PAINTED THE "CROIX DE LORRAINE" AND THE FRENCH TRICOLOR ON THE WALLS OF MOST OF THE BORDER TOWNS, POSING AS ITALIAN PARTISANS TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR MISSION.
5. FRENCH TROOPS IN THE AREA ARE POORLY EQUIPPED AND FRENCH MILITARY HAVETOLD THE LOCAL POPULATION THAT THIS IS BECAUSE THEY HAVE GIVEN ALL THEIR EQUIPMENT TO THE AMERICAN ARMY WHICH WAS FIGHTING IN ITALY.
6. FRENCH MILITARY HAVE ASSUMED A HOSTILE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE AMERICAN MILITARY, AND IT IS RELIABLY REPORTED BY AMERICAN SOLDIERS THAT THEY HAVE BEEN INSULTED ON SEVERAL OCCASSIONS.
7. THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES ARE REQUISITIONING ALL THE LOCAL PRODUCE AND ARE PAYING FOR IT IN FRANCS AT A PRICE DECIDED BY THEMSELVES. THE LOCAL POPULATION HAS EXPRESSED ITS OBJECTIONS TO BEING FORCED TO ACCEPT FRENCH FRANCS AND HAVE PREFERENCE FOR AMG CURRENCY. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES HOWEVER, THE CIVILIAN POPULATION CANNOT REFUSE TO ACCEPT FRENCH FRANCS FOR FEAR OF REPRISALS BY THE FRENCH. ALREADY LOCAL COMMITTEES HAVE APPROACHED CIC AGENTS AND HAVE BITTERLY COMPLAINED THAT THEY FRENCH AUTHORITIES ARE "TAKING THE FOOD OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF THEIR CHILDREN".
8. THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES ARE REQUISITIONING HOMES AND OFFICE SPACE WITHOUT ANY INTENT OF PAYMENT. A FAMILY OF SIX WAS MOVED TO ONE ROOM AND THE KITCHEN WHILE THE REST OF THE HOUSE WAS OCCUPIED BY FRENCH MILITARY. ANOTHER COMPLAINED TO CIC AGENTS THAT WHILE HE AND HIS FAMILY WERE VISITING FRIENDS IN TURIN, FRENCH SOLDIERS ENTERED THEIR HOME THROUGH A WINDOW AND THAT WHEN HE, THE TENANT, RETURNED HE FOUND HIS HOUSE OCCUPIED BY FRENCH TROOPS.
9. THE "COMITATO LIBERAZIONE NAZIONALE", SEZIONE COLLEGIALE VALSUSA, CALLED AT THE OFFICE OF CIC AT SUSAS AND EXPRESSED WILINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH THE ALLIED AUTHORITIES RATHER THAN WITH THE FRENCH. THIS GROUP IS A RESPECTED AND INFLUENTIAL COMMITTEE OF CITIZENS OF THE REGION.
10. THE ROAD-BLOCKS FROM SUSAS TO THE FRONTIER ARE MANNED ALTERNATELY BY AMERICAN AND FRENCH TROOPS. THE FIRST BLOCK IS ON THE OUT-

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SKIRTS OF SUSÀ (NO ONE IS STOPPED HERE) AND IS MANNED BY AMERICANS WITH AN AMERICAN MEDIUM TANK. THE NEXT BLOCK IS NINE KMS. WEST OF SUSÀ AND IS MANNED BY A DETACHMENT OF TEN ENLISTED MEN AND AN OFFICER WHO STOP AND CHECK ALL TRAVELLERS. ABOUT 2 KMS. WEST OF THIS BLOCK A FRENCH DETACHMENT OF 15 MEN UNDER LT. RATIVAL, BSM, STOPS ALL TRAFFIC INCLUDING AMERICAN VEHICLES, AND CHECKS PASSENGERS FOR A FRENCH ORDRE DE MISSION. ON THE ACTUAL BORDER, AN AMERICAN ROAD-BLOCK IS MANNED BY A DETACHMENT OF ENLISTED MEN UNDER LT. BUCKINGHAM.

11. NEAR THE FRONTIER FRENCH MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE CONDUCTING ROAD REPAIRS.

12. CIC AGENTS HAVE ALREADY ESTABLISHED AN ELABORATE INFORMATION SYSTEM IN THE AREA.

13. RADIO COMMUNICATIONS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED BETWEEN TURIN AND SUSÀ, AOSTA AND TUBIN, AND TURIN AND COMO. IN A FEW DAYS, COMMUNICATIONS WILL BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN TURIN AND VENTIMIGLIA.

AGENT'S NOTES

1. A STRONG PROTEST SHOULD BE SENT TO THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES FOR THEIR DELIBERATE BREACH OF THE AGREEMENT ON AFHQ TRAVEL REGULATIONS.

2. AMG SHOULD MOVE INTO THE AREA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

3. CLASHES BETWEEN AMERICAN AND FRENCH MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE INEVITABLE BECAUSE OF THE HOSTILE ATTITUDE OF THE FRENCH.

4. THE FRENCH SHOULD BE REQUESTED TO OBSERVE AFHQ REGULATIONS AS AGREED UPON MONTHS AGO.

5. THE EXISTING SITUATION IS POLITICAL RATHER THAN MILITARY..

6. LT. COL. BRUSS AND HIS OFFICERS AND MEN SHOULD BE COMMENDED FOR SPLENDID COOPERATION THEY HAVE GIVEN THIS SECTION, AND IN THE EFFICIENT MANNER IN WHICH THE ROAD BLOCK SYSTEM IS BEING OPERATED.

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