

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

785017

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10000/109/1419

EVACUATION,
MAR. 1944

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EVACUATION, YUGOSLAV ISLAND RAB.
MAR. 1944

120
2 APR Recd

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CA-BR.2

INCOMING MESSAGE
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TO FATIMA REPTD FORCE 266

FROM FREEDOM

SIGNED CINC CITE FHMGS

REF NO. F. 26243 APRIL 011815

SECRET. REFER OUR MGS 393-2 OF 31 MAR. SUBJECT IS EVACUATION REFUGEES FROM ISLAND RAB. FORCE 266 REPORT THAT FROM LOCAL KNOWLEDGE THEY DO NOT REPEAT NOT CONSIDER FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS HAVE ANY BEARING EVACUATION REFUGEES WHICH IS GOVERNED BY POLITICS COMA AVAILABILITY AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ANNEXING AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS. THEY FURTHER STATE LATEST REPORTS INDICATE GERMANS HAVE REOCCUPIED RAB. PLANS HOWEVER ARE BEING SUBMITTED TO TITO. PARA. FOR FORCE 266. YOUR G/333 OF 30 MAR REFERS. IN REPORTING TITOS OPINION TO THIS H.Q. REQUEST YOU REPEAT MESSAGE TO FATIMA DETAILED QUOTE NUMBER THIS CABLE



DEFERRED. THI 011955A

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Action - C A BR (2)

INFO - TITUS

REF. FOR FORCE 666. YOUR G/333 OF 30 MAR REFERS. IN

REPORTING TITOS OPINION TO THIS H.Q. REQUEST YOU REPEAT MESSAGE TO

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(S. E. Com) *4*

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS

DW/jjr

Military Government Section **2** APR Recd

MGS-383-2

31 March 1944.

SUBJECT: Evacuation to Italy of Yugoslav Refugees
from the Island of RAB.

TO : HQ Allied Control Commission (2 copies) -
Attention: MG and RC Section, and
Economic Section.

1. In November 1943 the War Department informed this Headquarters that the Yugoslav Government (understood to be the Royal Yugoslav Government outside Yugoslavia) had approached the State Department with an enquiry as to whether steps could be taken to arrange for the evacuation to Italy of 4,000 refugees from the Island of RAB. These refugees were reported to have been released from internment camps by the Partisan forces.

The matter had been referred previously by Washington to the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees in London and two possibilities were suggested, viz -

(a) Direct evacuation under Allied arrangements for concentration at Bari.

(b) Failing direct assistance by the Allies, provision of funds so that refugees could make their own arrangements to hire boats to carry them to the Italian Mainland.

2. In view of conditions then prevailing in Italy, particularly with regard to the Displaced Persons Sub-Commission, it was not considered advisable to facilitate the evacuation of these persons and the War Department were accordingly informed to that effect. At the same time enquiry was made of the Allied Control Commission (Brindisi) to discover the then latest information regarding refugees on the island. (Our cable 4726 of 23 November and your 1156 of 27 November refer).

3. The matter has now been reopened by the Combined Chiefs of Staffs with the suggestion that the evacuation of these refugees should be effected, and that the Partisan Headquarters should be assisted to carry this out by the

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provision of funds from American sources. The plans put forward by the Combined Chiefs of Staffs are as follows:

(a) Partisan Headquarters to be asked to furnish local currency to refugees to enable the latter to arrange their escape to Italy, such expenditures to be reimbursed in U.S. dollars or such funds as the Partisans may request.

(b) If Partisan Headquarters are unable to furnish funds they are to be asked to aid refugees in escaping by guaranteeing to boat owners and other persons assisting refugees to escape that they would be compensated by the American military authorities on the arrival of refugees in Italy.

In view of the improved conditions prevailing in Italy, particularly with regard to the Displaced Persons Sub-Commission, and of the expressed desire of the American Government to render assistance to refugees in enemy territories or in danger of falling into enemy hands, approval has been given to the plans suggested in this paragraph which are being communicated to the Partisan Headquarters for the opinion of Marshal Tito.

4. The following factors may affect the success of the plans suggested. It is possible that as the request for evacuation of these refugees is understood to have been made initially by the Royal Yugoslav Government that a number of these persons may be Chetnik in sympathy, in which case Partisan support may be lacking. It is reported that the Germans have assembled invasion barges in the KRALJEVICA-BAKAR which perhaps indicates the presence of elements of an assault landing battalion, probably intended for operations against RAB in the first instance. The distance from the island to Allied occupied Italy will increase the normal hazards of evacuation of refugees from the Dalmatian Islands.

5. In communicating the plans as in para 3, above, to the Partisan Headquarters it has been made clear that compensation to boat owners and other persons assisting the refugees will have to be effected through the agency of AFA, and that for this reason as well as for that stated below, boat owners or skippers should be enjoined to proceed if possible to BARI where the necessary financial arrangements could be made through the Displaced Persons Sub-Commission and the AFA office in that town. For reasons of security it is undesirable that refugees should be landed at random behind the Allied lines, but if they can be disembarked at BARI their screening, interrogation, and accommodation could be effected with the minimum of difficulty. It was

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also appreciated that it would be most difficult to arrange for financial compensation to be made to those to whom it was due otherwise than at BARI.

6. Pending receipt of information from the Partisan Headquarters as to whether the plans suggested are acceptable to Marshal Tito the following advance directions are issued for your guidance. These directions are applicable only to refugees who may be evacuated from the Island of RAB.

(a) AFA are authorized to advance the necessary funds to the Displaced Persons Sub-Commission in whom, it is suggested, responsibility for determining amounts due and for making payments might be vested.

(b) AFA should notify this Headquarters of amounts expended in order that the necessary arrangements for reimbursement by the American War Refugee Board can be made.

(c) In the event that the Partisan Headquarters should desire that compensation be made to boat owners and others assisting refugees in escaping on the arrival of the latter in Italy, Partisan Headquarters will be requested by us to indicate a fair basis and scale for such payments. The information thus obtained will be communicated to your Headquarters.

(d) Arrangements for the administration of any refugees who may enter Italy under the terms of the foregoing procedure should be the same as for other refugees received from Yugoslavia and the Dalmatian Islands.

(e) The arrival of any refugees entering Italy under the terms of the foregoing arrangements should be reported to this Headquarters in order that we may inform both the War Department and the American War Refugee Board of the progress and success of these plans.

7. You will be informed of the outcome of negotiations with the Yugoslav Partisan Headquarters so soon as details are available in AFHQ. Information should be received in sufficient time to permit the completion of arrangements by your Headquarters if the plans are to be put into effect.

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For the Acting Chief of Section :

[Signature]

D. G. WALKER
Major.

Copy to:-

G-2
G-3 (Special Ops).
The Office of the British Resident Minister.
The Office of the American Minister.
Mr. Ackerman, Representative of the American War Refugee Board, c/o The Office of the American Minister.
M.G.S. - Finance.

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