

SECRET1 March 1965
WH C # 65-91
LX-2500

MEMORANDUM FOR: FI/D Staff
WH/2/Salvador
TSD

SUBJECT : General: AMMUG/1 Debriefing Report #285
Specific: Agent Communications

REFERENCE : WH/C Memorandums #65-86 and #65-87
(Not sent WH/2/Salvador)

1. The LN Department has no means of direct radio communication with its own agents. If it wishes to send a message to an agent, it passes the message to the Illegal Department, and that office sends the message for LN, either to the LN agent directly if he has radio facilities for receiving it, or to an Illegal Department agent (with whom there is direct radio communication) for passage to the LN agent. The LN Department, when in 1963, for example, it wished to send a message to YON Sosa, passed the message to the Illegal Department, which sent it to an agent with radio communication in Guatemala to relay to him.

2. The Illegal Department has its own radio station for communication with its agents. The station is not in any of the headquarters' buildings; its actual location is not known. Even when the Illegal Department and the LN Department were combined in the MA Section and shared offices, the members of the section handling illegal agents were very unwilling to talk about communications in any way.

3. In the Zapote Operation, agent communication broke down because of several factors. As planned, the three agents in the operation were to use the same post office box as a cover address, but each agent was taught a separate s/w system. The Chemical Laboratory (LQ) had a record of each system against the agent's pseudonym, as well as examples of his handwriting, all under the heading of the Zapote Operation.

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4. It was planned that Roque DALTON, "MONTENEGRO," the principal agent in the Zapote Operation, was to do the letter writing. The other two agents were to pass their information to him. The first letter received at DGI (Cuban Intelligence Service) headquarters was picked up at the accommodation address in Mexico and forwarded to Havana, where through some confusion it was misrouted to the Illegal Department. From there it was eventually forwarded to LN. The Salvador Desk officer sent the letter in its envelope to LQ requesting processing and identifying the letter as belonging to the Zapote case, from SARA VIA (the second agent), and asking notification as to whether the letter contained secret writing. The LQ analysts, examining the letter, equated Zapote and "MONTENEGRO" (although SARA VIA was also part of the Zapote Operation) but checked with the desk officer and with him agreed to develop the secret writing with the SARA VIA developer. They believed that the letter contained secret writing because it was folded with the legal text outside and the blank side inside as if to protect a secret text. When the letter was tested with the SARA VIA developer, however, no secret writing appeared. The technicians then tried it with the "MONTENEGRO" developer, but by this time any secret writing the letter contained had been destroyed by the incorrect process. They identified the handwriting as that of SARA VIA, and the text indicated that there was an s/w enclosure. Meanwhile, "MAURICIO" had reported from Mexico that DALTON had been arrested and deported from El Salvador.

5. A second letter from SARA VIA was also received and tested with the SARA VIA developer. Although there were indications that it contained s/w, nothing could be recovered. There was no s/w on the envelope, which had not been opened. A third letter from SARA VIA, folded in the form to contain s/w, was also developed and showed signs of s/w but so faint that it could not be read. The desk officer thought that perhaps when DALTON was arrested SARA VIA had taken over his s/w and was using it instead of his own. The LQ analysts commented that SARA VIA was using for communication with DGI headquarters a system that he had been taught for use only in internal communications in El Salvador and that he should be told to use the proper system for headquarters. The desk officer, however, had no means of communicating with the agent since the s/w messages could not be read. A system of recognition for

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personal meetings with the agents in El Salvador was included in the operational program for Zapote, but that meant an intermediary or the case officer going to El Salvador for the contact. Since DALTON was out of El Salvador and other means of communication was lost, DALTON was ordered to Mexico and the desk officer arranged a trip there to get explanations of what had happened and reestablish mail communication. When the desk officer went to Mexico for the meeting in March 1964, however, DALTON and the other Salvadorans he wanted to see did not show up. The case officer also wrote a stiff memorandum to PINEIRO complaining about the quality of the s/w systems and training. His letter was returned with an endorsement by PINEIRO saying that the matter was being looked into and results could be expected. Up to April 1964, however, nothing concrete had been achieved, as far as the desk officer knew; he heard nothing from LQ and was unable to resolve the matter directly with the agent in Mexico because the agent never appeared for the scheduled meeting.

6. All agent communications from the field to accommodation addresses in Mexico or elsewhere are picked up and forwarded through the field station to headquarters without being opened. In the Sonia Operation, for example, when the agent wanted a meeting in Mexico, she sent a letter to her accommodation address there; the letter was picked up and forwarded to headquarters; when it had been developed at headquarters, the desk officer informed the case officer in Mexico of the time, date, and place set by the agent for the meeting. In no case does the field station open and read any agent correspondence.

7. In the Zapote Operation, all agent personal documents were picked up during the training period and were photographed for the agent's file. When the agent left Cuba to return to his operational area, the personal documents such as the cedula de identidad were returned to him.

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(Ben Stotts)
C/WH/C/RR/OS

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