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HEADQUARTERS
COUNTER INTELLIGENCE CORPS
ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
APO 512

8 February 1945

SUBJECT: Proposed Control of the Franco-Italian Frontier.

TO : A. G. of S., G-2(CI), AFHQ, APO 512. (Through Channels).

INTRODUCTION. This frontier is 602 kilometers in length and will be controlled by approximately 14 men of C.I.C., in conjunction with the Guardia di Finanza, Carabinieri and SIM/CS.

1. Personnel. Because of its size, the frontier has not been divided into sections. Proposed headquarters will be TURIN. (Exhibit A).

a. Utilization and allocation of C.I.C. personnel is discussed in attached report. (Exhibit B).

b. Transportation and communication, as it directly affects the functioning of this section is also discussed in same attached report. (Exhibit C).

2. Guard System.

a. Guardia di Finanza will be employed on the actual frontier as a permanent guard. The location of these various frontier guard points can be found in attached SIM/CS report. (Exhibit D). Here the actual pre-war strength is shown

(1) The activities and control methods employed by the Guardia di Finanza will be under direct observation and supervision of C.I.C. personnel.

b. The Carabinieri will be utilized as an auxiliary force to supplement the Guardia di Finanza, in addition to assisting C.I.C. in checking passengers and controlling traffic at the two security controls at VENTENIGLIA and MONTEGEMEVRE-FREJUS. If there is available personnel, utilization of road blocks leading to the frontier will be employed.

c. The Pubblica Sicurezza will be utilized in setting up defense in depth, i.e. Restricted Zone. This zone will be a series of road blocks in the densely populated areas. In addition, Pubblica Sicurezza will be utilized in interrogation of suspects, and doing general police work in the rear areas.

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d. S.M./CS will work in close conjunction with C.I.C., having men at the recognized crossing points, as well as assisting C.I.C. in interrogation and related duties at the various branch offices. Close liaison between S.M./CS and C.I.C. will be necessary in order to apprehend clandestine crossers, and moreover to determine the intent of violators of this control.

3. Topography.

(The following information was extracted from I.S.T.D/C/237 - "C" Reports on Northern Italy.)

Franco-Italian Frontier

A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The frontier lies along the crest of the Alps and is formed by the actual watershed itself for the headwaters of the river PO. In the east the rivers drain to the PO BASIN, and on the west to the RHONE VALLEY.

B. HEIGHT

The Alps consist, from South to North, of the MARITIME ALPS (watershed 5 and 8 miles on Italian side of frontier); the COLTIAN ALPS between the STURA DI DEMONTE and the DORA RIPARIA; the GRAIAN ALPS between the DORA RIPARIA and DORA BALTEIN, where the frontier ridge attains an average height of 12,000 feet and the GRAN PARADISO reaches 13,320 feet; and finally the PENNINE ALPS in the north where the greatest average height of 15,000 feet is reached in the frontier crest of the MT. BIANCO to MT. ROSE range.

In this part of the ALPS, there are no lower ranges which might make the ascent to the higher ALPS more gradual.

Snow lies on most of these mountains for many months of the year. The higher mountains are perpetually snow-covered. Snow is likely to affect movement in this region.

C. COMMUNICATIONS

The valleys form the chief lines of communication and areas of settlement. Each valley is comparatively isolated, being separated from the next by the high mountains. Owing to this lack of longitudinal valleys, the only external communication is via the upper PO VALLEY.

The ALPS form a complete barrier against any movement to the north or north-west into FRANCE or SWITZERLAND out of the upper PO VALLEY and the main part of ITALY. They form less of a barrier against movement into ITALY, owing to the fact that the slope to the PO is steep and the slope on the French side more gradual, with easier inter-valley communications.

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D. ROAD SYSTEM NEAR MARITIME ALPS

The main road from CUNEA follows the VERMANAGUA VALLEY south to the coast, the frontier and NICE. The road crosses the COLLE DI TENDA and descends the ROIA VALLEY. Beyond VALAURI the road becomes winding. It crosses the frontier at DALMAZZO and recrosses it near PIENA and leads to VENTIMIGLIA on the coastal road to NICE. North along the frontier to LARCHE, there are no lateral roads and the high mountains prevent any movement. Settlement is sparse. From CUNEO, two fairly good roads lead to the LARCHE PASS where a customs post is located.

Between the river STURA DI DEMONTE and the river CHISONE there are no passes leading over the frontier, and no roads penetrate the high mountain ranges.

Between the CHISONE and the DORA RIPARIA rivers, roads run from TURIN into FRANCE. The road in the CHISONE valley is much narrower and difficult. It leads from PINEROLO, through the very high mountains of FENESTRELLE and SESYRIERE to join the road at CESESANA TORINESE. This junction is 3 miles from the MONTGENEVRE PASS where the road crosses the frontier at just over 6,500 feet and enters the valley of the river DURANCE, leading to BRIANCON. The road and railroad follow the DORA RIPARIA from TURIN to FRANCE. At SUSAS the road branches, one road proceeding north over the MT. CENIS PASS at just over 6,500 feet into FRANCE; and the other road continuing the whole way up the river valley to join the CHISONE road. The railway, however, follows the tributary valley of the BAR-DONECCHIA and then enters the FREJUS tunnel. This region is well populated, but communications are difficult except by road at the upper and lower end. Snow may block these passes during the winter months, and only constant clearing can keep them open.

From MT. CENIS to the Swiss border the frontier is a continuous range of glacier-covered mountains of sharp ridges and peaks, rising to an average of 11,500 feet. There are no roads across the frontier except at the LITTLE ST. BERNARD PASS near the Swiss frontier. There are a few isolated footpaths and tracks. The road from AOSTA to LITTLE ST. BERNARD PASS becomes extremely zig-zagging above PRE ST. DIDIER before it crosses the LITTLE ST. BERNARD PASS into FRANCE. Terrain here is so difficult that the roads must always be followed for any movement in the upper valleys. Steep slopes limit movement off the roads.

4. Policy.

a. In general, this control will follow the same procedure utilized by other frontier control agencies during military occupation.

(1) The frontier will be closed completely with the exception of the recognized security control points.

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(a) All passengers crossing at these points will be properly documented, and in addition to a valid passport and necessary visas, will possess an MTA if departing and an AFP if entering.

(b) Stop lists will be employed as a further security check.

(2) A frontier control operates as a convenience for the military establishment, and its main function is taking appropriate steps to safeguard the security of military information and lines of communication.

(3) The frontaliere (or frontier permit system) will be put into effect immediately, and the permission for persons on either side of the frontier to cross back and forth will be the sole responsibility of this travel control section.

(4) The final decision as to permission of travellers who are exceptions to the established rules to cross will rest with G-2(CI-111), AFHQ. However, as much responsibility as can be delegated, should be delegated to the subordinate commands.

5. Operational Procedure.

a. This frontier should be sealed as soon as possible.

(1) This travel control detachment will have to be among the first to arrive at the frontier.

b. Security controls at VENTEMIGLIA and MONTIGENEVRE-FREJUS should be immediately established, following a prearranged plan.

c. Travel control headquarters and branch offices should be set up, and personnel assigned to the border points for surveillance of the Italian guard system.

d. A complete survey of the frontier should be effected as soon as possible.

(1) This will enable the establishment and dispersal of guard units so as to effect an efficient control of the frontier.

e. The frontaliere system to be set up.

(1) Those people wishing frontaliere should be checked, and the final decision based on objective investigation, will determine the feasibility of granting frontaliere. Frontaliere should be issued only to life-long residents of the frontier. This way the threat of "stay-behind agents" can be eliminated.

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6. Overall Picture.

a. Topographically this frontier will be difficult to control. Because of the limited number of C.I.C. agents available for this frontier, great reliance will have to be placed in the Italians. This, in turn, will necessitate close surveillance of the fixed guard posts.

b. Need for qualified linguists and self-reliant Agents is obvious, since this section will be the only representative of AFHQ in the area, and will have to act accordingly.

c. Sufficient transportation and good communications are prime requisites. Efficient control is an impossibility if there is a break-down of the above. A limited number of Agents will have to control a frontier 602 kilometers long of difficult terrain, and the need for sufficient transportation and good communications is obvious.

d. Close liaison with the local authorities is another requisite of this Section. Agents must be capable of insisting on adherence to the master plan without causing friction.

e. For C.I.C. function in frontier control, see attached report, same subject. (Exhibit E).

JAMES T. O. BRAAPLADT
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Inclosures: (5)
Exhibits A to E, inclusive.

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