

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

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SECRET

17 23 18 Z

DIST 17 AUGUST 1966

COUNTRY YUGOSLAVIA

DOI 13 AUGUST 1966

SUBJECT ALLEGED PLOT BY RANKOVIC AND HIS FOLLOWERS TO OVERTHROW

25X1A

YUGOSLAV PRESIDENT TITO

REF:

25X1A

ACQ

FIELD NO.

25X1X

SOURCE

25X1X

1. DURING THE COURSE OF A CONVERSATION WITH BORA JOKSIMOVIC, WHO HAD JUST RETURNED FROM BELGRADE, AND PETAR BURSAC, WHO HAD RECENTLY TALKED WITH MILOS MORACA, AN OFFICIAL IN THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT OF THE STATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (SSFA) AND FORMER YUGOSLAV CONSUL GENERAL IN GRAZ, AUSTRIA, IT WAS MENTIONED THAT FORMER YUGOSLAV VICE PRESIDENT ALEKSANDAR RANKOVIC HAD LONG PLANNED A COUP D'ETAT. ACCORDING TO JOKSIMOVIC, THE RANKOVIC GROUP HAD PLANNED SOME SORT OF ACTION IN 1962 BUT AT THAT TIME THE LATE SLOBODAN PENEZIC DISSUADED

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By jc, NARA, Date 7-6-01

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THEM BECAUSE THEIR PLANS WERE BASED SOLELY ON SERBIAN NATIONALISM.

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(~~SECRET~~ COMMENT: PENEZIC WAS A FORMER HIGH RANKING ARMY OFFICER AND A FANATIC SERB NATIONALIST WHO DIED IN SEPTEMBER 1964. HOWEVER, HE PROBABLY FORESAW THAT SUCH ACTION WOULD INEVITABLY RESULT IN CIVIL WAR BETWEEN THE OTHER REPUBLICS AND SERBIA.)

2. BURSAC SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN ATTEMPTS IN 1960-1961 BY RANKOVIC AND HIS SUPPORTERS, INCLUDING SVETISLAV STEFANOVIC, TO DISCREDIT EDVARD KARDELJ (PRESIDENT OF THE YUGOSLAV FEDERAL ASSEMBLY AND USUALLY MENTIONED AS A LEADING CANDIDATE TO SUCCEED TITO). WHEN KARDELJ VISITED LONDON, RUMORS WERE SPREAD AROUND BELGRADE THAT KARDELJ HAD REQUESTED POLITICAL ASYLUM IN ENGLAND. BEFORE THAT, IT WAS RUMORED THAT KARDELJ WAS THE LEADER OF A PLAN FOR THE SECESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA FROM THE FEDERATION.

3. STILL ACCORDING TO BURSAC, RECENT PLANS HAD BEEN FOR THE COUP D'ETAT TO TAKE PLACE WHILE PRESIDENT TITO WAS TRAVELLING OUTSIDE OF YUGOSLAVIA, AND FOR RANKOVIC TO BE NAMED PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC. BURSAC, ALLEGEDLY REPEATING WHAT HE HAD HEARD FROM MORACA, SAID THAT RANKOVIC'S PLANS HAD BEEN LEARNED FROM THREE DIFFERENT SOURCES:

A. OVER TWO YEARS AGO, FEDERAL SECRETARY FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS MILAN MISKOVIC, WHOSE WORK HAD BEEN HAMPERED BY INTERFERENCE FROM STEFANOVIC AS WELL AS FROM VOJIN LUKIC, WENT

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TO THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (FEC) AND PRESENTED A THREE-HOUR REPORT ON THE SITUATION WITHIN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS SECRETARIAT, ASKING THAT HE BE RELIEVED FROM DUTY. ( [REDACTED] COMMENT: MISKOVIC WAS APPOINTED FEDERAL SECRETARY FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS IN MARCH 1965, SUCCEEDING VOJIN LUKIC, A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE UNION OF COMMUNISTS OF YUGOSLAVIA (UCY) AND ORGANIZATIONAL SECRETARY OF THE SERBIAN COMMUNIST PARTY. STEFANOVIC HAS RECENTLY BEEN OUSTED FROM HIS POSITION AS PRESIDENT OF THE FEC COMMISSION FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS. THE FEC TOOK NO ACTION ON MISKOVIC'S RESIGNATION; AS OF MID-AUGUST 1966, HE IS STILL FEDERAL SECRETARY FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS.)

B. ABOUT MID-1964, AT A BANQUET DURING STEFANOVIC'S VISIT TO MOSCOW, THE YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR TO THE SOVIET UNION HEARD FORMER GENERAL SAKOTA, THEN ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS, REMARK UNDER THE HEAVY INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL AND IN THE PRESENCE OF THE SOVIET MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR (SIC) AND STEFANOVIC, THAT "KARDELJ CAN NEVER SUCCEED TITO. THAT CAN ONLY BE RANKOVIC. AND THAT WILL BE VERY SOON. AND WHEN HE (RANKOVIC) BECOMES PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, WE SHALL TAKE EVERYTHING INTO OUR HANDS AND WE SHALL SHOW THE SLOVENES AND CROATS." THE YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR IMMEDIATELY TOLD STEFANOVIC: "YOU HEARD THAT. IT IS MY DUTY TO TAKE STEPS TO INFORM

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AUTHORIZED PERSONS. HAD YOU NOT BEEN HERE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN YOU WHOM I WOULD HAVE FIRST NOTIFIED; SINCE YOU ARE PRESENT, THIS WILL NOT BE NECESSARY. WHEN YOU GET HOME, CHECK ON WHAT THIS MEANS." STEFANOVIC REPORTEDLY LAUGHED AND MADE GESTURES IMPLYING THAT EVERYTHING WOULD BE ALL RIGHT. WHEN THE YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR LATER RETURNED TO BELGRADE, HE FOUND THAT NO ONE APPEARED TO HAVE HEARD OF THE INCIDENT, WHICH HE THEN REPORTED. OFFICIALS WHO HEARD HIM CONNECTED HIS ACCOUNT WITH THE PREVIOUS STATEMENT BY MISKOVIC AND BECAME SUSPICIOUS. ( [REDACTED]

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COMMENT: STEFANOVIC VISITED THE SOVIET UNION IN FEBRUARY 1964. THE STORY ABOUT SAKOTA'S DRUNKEN COMMENTS WAS REPORTED BY DAVID BINDER IN AN ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN THE 14 JULY 1966 NEW YORK TIMES; BINDER STATED THAT THIS WAS ONE OF THE STORIES THEN CIRCULATING IN BELGRADE. THERE ARE SLIGHT VARIATIONS IN THE TWO RUMORS, HOWEVER. ACCORDING TO BINDER'S STORY, THE YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR, CVIJETIN MIJATOVIC, "REPORTED THE INCIDENT IN A TELEGRAM TO BELGRADE BUT THE TELEGRAM NEVER REACHED HIS CHIEF, FORMER FOREIGN SECRETARY (AND NOW VICE PRESIDENT) KOCA POPOVIC. IT WAS APPARENTLY INTERCEPTED BY THE SECRET POLICE."

C. BURSAC, APPARENTLY STILL QUOTING MORACA, SAID THAT WHILE HE WAS EN ROUTE TO OR FROM MOSCOW AT THE HEAD OF THE YUGOSLAV DELEGATION TO THE SOVIET CONGRESS (THE 23rd CONGRESS

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OF THE CPSU, WHICH BEGAN ON 29 MARCH 1966) RANKOVIC WAS REPORTEDLY TOASTED AS THE FUTURE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC AT A FUNCTION ATTENDED BY VARIOUS AMBASSADORS. (BURSAC SAID HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT HAVE OCCURRED IN EITHER RUMANIA OR HUNGARY.) BURSAC ALSOSAID THAT IT LOOKED AS IF RANKOVIC HAD REVEALED HIS PLAN TO THE SOVIETS AND HAD ASKED FOR THEIR SUPPORT, AND THAT TITO HAD FOUND THIS OUT.

3. BURSAC THEN SAID THAT TITO HIMSELF HAD DISCOVERED THE AUDIO INSTALLATION IN HIS VILLA; HE NOTICED EXTRA WIRES ATTACHED TO THE PHONE CONNECTION AND DISCONNECTED THEM BEFORE HE LEFT THE HOUSE, BUT FOUND THAT THEY HAD BEEN RE-CONNECTED WHEN HE RETURNED. HIS MAID TESTIFIED THAT ONLY ONE PERSON, MAJOR GENERAL LUKA BOZOVIC, TITO'S AIDE, HAD BEEN IN THE ROOM, WHEREUPON TITO HAD BOZOVIC REMOVED IMMEDIATELY.

4. FOLLOWING THE FOURTH PLENUM IN EARLY JULY 1966, ONE OR MORE MEETINGS OF PARTY MEMBERS WITHIN THE UDB (SECURITY POLICE) WERE HELD AT THE "PANE DJUKIC CLUB" (THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS SECRETARIAT CLUB) WHICH WERE ATTENDED BY SLOBODAN SAKOTA. SAKOTA'S REPORT WAS ATTACKED BY ILIC (FNU), WHO CALLED SAKOTA A ROTTEN HYPOCRITE AND SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN LYING.

5. JOKSIMOVIC SAID THAT IN BELGRADE PEOPLE WERE SAYING THAT

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(KOCA) POPOVIC HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN DENOUNCED BY STEFANOVIC, AND THAT THE LATTER'S SECRETARY HAD REPORTEDLY FAINTED WHEN SHE WAS TOLD THAT POPOVIC HAD BEEN ELECTED VICE PRESIDENT, BECAUSE SHE KNEW ABOUT THE STEFANOVIC DENUNCIATIONS.

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6. ~~SECRET~~ COMMENT: JOKSIMOVIC'S COMMENTS APPEAR TO BE MOSTLY RUMOR AND HEARSAY, BUT THE INFORMATION BURSAC APPARENTLY OBTAINED FROM MORACA HAS A RING OF AUTHENTICITY.)

7. NO FIELD DISSEM.

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