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A.C.(O)(50) <sup>35</sup>~~34~~

19TH JULY, 1950

CABINET

OFFICIAL COMMITTEE ON COMMUNISM (OVERSEAS)

PLANNING STAFF FOR COLD WAR ACTIVITIES

Note by the Joint Secretaries

With reference to Minute 1, Conclusion (3) of the 21st Meeting of the Committee we circulate herewith, for consideration, a draft of a letter from Sir William Strang to Heads of Missions regarding the constitution of the Overseas Planning Section.

This will be taken as an additional item at the meeting of the Committee to be held on Thursday, 20th July at 2.0 p.m.

(Signed) C. A. L. CLIFFE  
J. Y. MACKENZIE

Joint Secretaries

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

30TH JULY, 1950.

DRAFT LETTER TO HEADS OF MISSIONS

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

Foreign Office telegram No. 6 Circular of the 23rd January, 1948, announced the Government's decision to adopt a more positive anti-Communist publicity policy, and the creation of a new Foreign Office Department (the Information Research Department) to help put that policy into effect.

For some time we have been thinking about extending the scope of our anti-Communist activities overseas into fields other than those of propaganda, and have been considering what could be done by economic and other means (not excluding subversive and similar clandestine operations) to forestall and counteract the spread and influence of Communism, and to hamper the activities of Communist parties and Governments, wherever such intervention seems likely to yield dividends.

For this purpose an organisation is being set up in the Foreign Office with the task of stimulating and coordinating plans. It will be known as the Overseas Planning Section, and will be a part of the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department. C.E. King has been appointed to take charge of the section, with the rank of Counsellor, and he will be assisted by a small staff, including a representative of the Chiefs of Staff organisation. He will of course be in close touch with other interested Government Departments.

King will welcome any suggestions you may from time to time wish to send him for "stepping up" our anti-Communist effort, outside the propaganda field, in your part of the world. The Overseas Planning Section is ready to consider any scheme, not necessarily clandestine, which, in your opinion, seems worth taking up. Conversely, it would also welcome advice, in the light of your knowledge of local conditions, on pitfalls to be avoided. We fully realise that each country presents a different problem and that what may be possible in one may be out of the question in another.

It should be understood that any schemes not covered by existing Ministerial authority will require Ministerial approval.

I ask you to restrict knowledge of this letter to those senior members of your staff who you think should see it, and to impress upon them its highly secret nature.

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