

TA

File

July 16, 1953

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CALL

Mr. Armstrong, in a telephone conversation on another matter with [redacted] inquired about the outcome, if any, of the case of the alleged brother of [redacted] in Baltimore, discovered by the Times-Herald. Mr. Keay of the FBI was with [redacted] at the time and promised to check into it.

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b7C

At 3 PM Mr. Keay telephoned Mr. Armstrong and reported that the FBI had investigated the case but had found so many discrepancies of fact, etc., that it was hardly possible to prove or disprove the story. No reference to it has appeared in the Times-Herald and seemingly the matter has been dropped.

E. Goodwin

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HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 7-2-97 BY SP2 alw/3b
NND 951025

ES 91-61/21/96
53

R:EJG

NND 951025 - 590

~~SECRET~~ ~~Approved~~ 32
March 11, 1953

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NOTES ON TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

Subject: Alleged Brother of [redacted]

DATE 7-2-97 BY SP2 almy/p6b

NND 951025

At 6 PM, Mr. Armstrong* telephoned Mr. David Sentner, Bureau Chief of the Hearst Newspapers in Washington (see previous memoranda, same subject), in answer to Mr. Sentner's phone call earlier in the afternoon. Mr. Armstrong told him that without definite authentication of the story at this time, the Department could not be in any way involved in it and could not give any advice to his client. He suggested that the FBI would be the agency best able to examine the evidence and try to dig up more information. Mr. Armstrong said he would be glad to have the FBI get in touch with Mr. Sentner, if he wished, and look at the material. Mr. Sentner agreed that this would be very good and said that he was on a close personal basis with the FBI. He said further that he had assumed the Department would probably feel that way, and asked if, without any official recording, the paper went ahead with the story, there would be any objection. He referred to the possibility that the Logan Act was involved. He went on to say that actually it isn't anybody's business if a newspaper wants to print such a story and wants to print the appeal. Mr. Armstrong said that he did not know and could not advise whether the Logan Act would or would not be applicable, but that Mr. Sentner was asking for an answer to the question that he had already been told the Department could not give him. Mr. Sentner then asked if the paper would be acting in a way which might be detrimental to our foreign policy if it went ahead, to which Mr. Armstrong replied that that would depend in the last analysis on the validity of the story.

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Mr. Sentner said that there was no validation possible for the story, that the evidence is circumstantial; the paper's plan is to tell frankly that the man who says he is the brother of [redacted] has no positive evidence, but that there are certain things which make him think it is possible. His evidence consists of coincidental dates, the fact that they came from the same town, that he has some pictures and correspondence with the family. There is a distinct possibility that the story is true, and if it were possible to validate the facts it would have far-reaching effects. The man would simply make an appeal to his brother for peace and cessation of the persecution of the Jews in the USSR. Mr. Sentner said this would be as far as he goes, and asked if the Department saw any potential harm in that, or if there would be any different answer if he went to General Smith, where they had begun, or was Mr. Armstrong reflecting the General's position? Mr. Armstrong said he was.

* After discussion with Mr. Matthews, Phillips (P) and Horsey (S/P)

Mr. Sentner then asked what the FBI could do for them. Mr. Armstrong suggested to him there may be other kinds of evidence the FBI can get at which the newspaper can't. Mr. Sentner agreed, and said further that the brother is perfectly willing to go through with the scheme if there is no objection from the State Department. Mr. Sentner asked if he couldn't tell the man that as far as he (Sentner) knew there wouldn't be any official objection. Mr. Armstrong told him again that he could not answer that and that it would have to be Mr. Sentner's own judgment as to whether they went ahead on the story or not.

Mr. Sentner then asked Mr. Armstrong to inform the FBI (Mr. Hoover or Mr. Nichols) that he would be in touch with them on this the next morning. Mr. Armstrong said he would inform the FBI of this through our regular channel. Mr. Sentner agreed that this was a very good solution.

Mr. Armstrong then called Mr. Ford of SY and, after summarizing the situation, asked him to inform the FBI. Mr. Ford said that he would be glad to do so.

R:E JG:WPA:eJg

NND 951025 - 592

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DATE 7-2-97 BY SP220dm/jbs

NNND 951025

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY

Lon Nicholas, Hoover

1. Dept cannot be involved or give advice in absence of authenticity.
2. Think FBI is the agency to ~~analyze~~ examination evidence for credibility. Will have them get in touch.

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DATE 7-2-97 BY SP2alm/bb

NND 951025

RFS:pmj

March 10, 1953

MEMO OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

Mr. David Sentner, Washington Bureau Chief of the Hearst newspapers, telephoned Mr. Armstrong this afternoon in connection with the project on which he (Mr. Sentner) and William Randolph Hearst, Jr. are working, i.e., they have found a man who claims to a brother of [redacted]. The man now lives in the US, has a business, and has been out of USSR since approximately 1921. He says their father was a tailor and there were 9 children in the family. Mr. Sentner is trying to run down any information on [redacted] family name or very early history which might tie in with the above. The family is Jewish.

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Mr. Armstrong told Mr. Sentner that our information on Malenkov before the revolution is extremely scanty, but that he would check into it and let Mr. Sentner know.

DRS reported that they have not been able to dig up anything along the above line.

Mr. Armstrong has put in a call to Mr. Sentner to report that there is no further information on [redacted] background.

R:EGoodwin

RFS:pmj

NND 951025 - 594

ALL FBI INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 7-2-97 BY SP2 dlm/bb

NND 951025

March 11, 1953

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Alleged brother of [redacted]

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b7C

William Randolph Hearst, Jr., got in touch with Mr. Armstrong at the request of General Smith and reported the following story:

A Hearst correspondent in Baltimore has turned up a man of Jewish faith who claims to be the brother of [redacted]. The nature of the evidence so far developed is circumstantial but includes (a) a picture of the whole family of nine children including one child whom he claims is Georgi, and (b) correspondence with other members of the family which bear on the subject. The man claims that the children were all born in Poland but were moved to Orenburg at a young age. He claims further that he last saw Georgi in about 1917 and that he himself came to the US about 1921. Apparently there is some other circumstantial evidence.

As yet the Department has been unable to dig up any evidence which would help to corroborate the story. [redacted] original name, for instance, is not known.

The Hearst people have now apparently developed with the man a plan whereby he would send a message to Malenkov claiming brotherhood and urging [redacted] to seek peace and specifically urging him to have the USSR stop persecuting the Jews. Mr. Sentner, who is acting for W. R. Hearst, has now approached R requesting the Department's views on such a move, indicating among other things, that the man is reluctant to go ahead with them unless he has the assurance that the Department is not averse. Sentner points out that when the Hearst correspondent first approached the man in Baltimore, he called in his Rabbi for counsel. Subsequently the Rabbi has called "over 100" other Rabbis in the region on the proposed message to [redacted] and "they all agree it would be a good thing." Sentner is concerned at this because he now anticipates a leak, probably garbled, through the Rabbis.

Sentner specifically asks the Department: (a) its views (presumably on the basis that if the Department requested, they would drop the message to [redacted] angle); (b) any assurance the Department would like to give the man that such a message would not interfere with our foreign policy, and (c) any desire to interview the man himself for either intelligence purposes or to influence the type and method of sending the message to [redacted]

Fisher Howe
Deputy

R:FH:ejg

NND 951025 - 595

ALL FBI INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 7-2-97 BY SP2 dm/bb
#NND 951025

P.A.: In the absence of the ability to authenticate the story at this time, the Department can't be in any way involved in it now. We cannot even give advice to ~~to~~ your client. But it occurs to us that the agency best able to examine the evidence, test the credibility, try to dig up anything more for you is the FBI. We would be glad to have them get in touch with you and look at the stuff...

Sentner: That would be very good. We are all on/^a close personal relationship with them. I think it would be good to do that. We assumed you would feel that way and I thought without any official recording if we went ahead there wouldn't be any official objection. You know you have the Logan Act involved here.

P.A.: What's that?

Sentner: (Explained it) I would say that it isn't anybody's business if the newspaper wants to print ^{such} a story and wants to print ^{such} an appeal. Do you?

P.A.: Well, I just can't give you an answer.

Sentner: Are we running into any policy which might be detrimental to our foreign policy?

P.A.: That will depend in the last analysis on the validity of the story.

Sentner: Well, there's no validation to this. Our plan is to frankly tell that he has no evidence, but there ~~is~~ are certain things that make him think it is possible. He has no specific evidence other than coincidental dates and, of course, that he came from the same town,

has pictures, etc.; - there is a distinct possibility. If we could validate that, it would far-reaching...

P.A.: It would be a miracle.~~if~~

Sentner: He makes an appeal for peace and cessation of the persecution of the Jews. That is as far as he goes. That doesn't seem to be of any potential harm, does it? Would there be any different approach if we went to the General, where we started? In other words, you are reflecting his position?

P.A.: Yes.

Sentner: If we go to the FBI, what can they do for us?

P.A.: They may be kinds of evidence ~~maxthis~~ ~~you~~/can get at which we can't.

Sentner: Yes. Now the other thing is this man says he is perfectly willing to go in the form I told you if there is no objection from the State Department, and that you cannot give me, except I can tell him ~~to~~, as far as I know officially we won't be interfered with.

P.A.: That will have to be your own judgment. You will have to make that decision yourself.

Sentner: Suppose you inform the FBI that I will get in touch with them in connection with this tomorrow. They know me very well. Tell J. Edgar or Lou Nichols that I will be coming to them.

P.A.: I will inform them through our regular channel of this.

Sentner: I think that is a very good solution.

(END)

(NOTE: P.A. informed SY Ford of above, who said he would inform FBI)