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GREECE

SUBJECT: STABILITY OF GOVERNMENT.Greek Guerrilla Forces.

The Greek guerrilla forces have an ample supply of rifles and rifle ammunition, left with peasants when the Greek Army retreated. They probably are pretty well equipped with light machine guns (automatic rifles) and probably have a fair supply of ammunition for these guns. However, it is doubtful if they have many heavy m.g.'s and probably almost no heavy m.g. ammunition. Ammunition for these arms not interchangeable in Greek Army. Probably no artillery at all.

There is enough food in the mountain farms and villages to supply the guerrilla bands, especially as all peasants will assist them to the limit of their power. The seizure of food stuffs in these mountain areas is very difficult for the Axis occupying forces and it is doubtful if the Axis can get very much here. On the other hand, the guerrillas can get food from these sources so long as there is any -- and the peasants in the mountains will always have some food.

The guerrilla warfare is according to the traditional Greek style, much the same sort of war that the klephts waged against the Turks. Organization is probably by small districts, perhaps one district for Lamia, another for Larissa, and so on. The colonel was very vague as to any central direction for these bands. He thought there were probably three or four bands to a district.

Greeks have been largely driven out of the parts of western Thrace occupied by the Bulgars. Col. Xenos believes the situation now is very much like that at the end of the last war, when the Greek forces returning were met only by widows and very small children. All men had been removed to Bulgaria, from which probably not more than 5% ever returned.

The Turkish population of this area has never been loyal to Greece. As an intelligence officer in Gumuljina during the 1930's, Col. Xenos was well aware that they took their instructions from the Turkish government and conducted espionage. Not, however, sabotage.

Bulgarian officers have crossed the line now dividing the new Bulgarian territories, in order to visit Greek territories now under the puppet Greek government. Bulgarian officers do visit cities like Florina, though on the Greek side of the present line.

Greek hatred of Germans and Italians is about equal. However there is a disgust and contempt toward the Italians as well as hatred. Should the German or Italian armies ever attempt to withdraw from the Balkans in defeat, not one man will ever escape. No possible question about this. The population has ample strength for wiping out a retreating army.

Gonatas and his movement are at present completely impotent.

Before the outbreak of the war there was an Imro section in Salonica. It had more than a hundred members, some of them very surprising. One was Kotzamanes, whom Xenos regards as a Bulgar. Many of the members were Kutzovlachs.

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CONFIDENTIALGreek Guerrilla Forces (cont.)

Ivan Michailoff received instruction from his organization in July or August, 1939, to reach some kind of agreement with the British. He remained in touch with the British until February, 1940. This may be denied by British in Washington but they simply do not know. Col. Xenos will get in touch with proper people in London and report further on this matter. He feels sure that in February, 1940, the British indicated to Michailoff that they could have nothing further to do with him. No information on exact nature of these conversations.

It is probably true that the Germans are keeping in their own hands the area between the Maritza and a line due South from Orta Keui to the sea. This is especially important territory and occupation by their troops gives them a sort of control. (There is no actual evidence that the Germans are here.)

The apparently continuing German occupation of the right bank of the Maritza is probably designed mainly to keep communications of this important area in their own hands.

(Source: Conversation with Col. Xenos, G-2, Greek Army. Office of Col. Ulius Amoss, AUS, 22, October, 1942,---John E. Bakeless.)

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Conversation with Col. Xenos, G-2, Greek Army, at O.S.S. offices (Office of Col. Amoss), Oct. 15, 1942. With JB

There are probably about 20,000 Greek guerillas now operating. They are necessarily broken up into small bands which hit and run -- that being the only way in which warfare of this sort can be carried on. There is no difficulty about weapons as practically all the small arms of the retreating Greek army were handed over to peasants to hide. As all Greeks have had military training, these will be in good condition when needed and can be handed over to the guerillas purely at any time. During domestic troubles, Greeks in hiding have in the hills been known to stay "on the run" for three years at a time, even with part of the population willing to betray them for political reasons. Under present conditions this is easier than ever before, since now the whole population is aiding guerillas.

The officer named Douras, often referred to in news dispatches, is presumably some one operating under a pseudonym. Col. Xenos is officer named positive that there is no Douras in the Greek army.