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Chief, Contact Division, Attn: Support (Crowley)
THW : Chief, Detroit Office

22 Oct 59

E. S. Rittenburg, Cleveland Resident Agent

Robert E. Webster

REF: Crowley-Rittenburg telecon of 21 Oct 59, same subject
Travis-Rittenburg telecon of 20 Oct 59, same subject

A-79930

1. On 20 Oct 59, Major Robert Cochran of OSI and his probable replacement in Cleveland, Major Carroll Edelen, dropped into the office of the Cleveland Resident Agent to ask about Robert E. Webster. In the absence of both Rittenburg and [redacted] who were out on previously scheduled appointments, they asked one of the secretaries about the matter but were told by her that they would have to talk with Mr. Rittenburg. Cochran thereupon left the following questions with the secretary regarding the Rand-Webster case, to which he said that "high level air force interests" wanted an answer. These questions, telephoned to Bob Travis on the same day, are as follows:

- a. "Is this office doing anything concerning Webster's defection?"
- b. "If not, do they contemplate doing anything?"
- c. "What would this office have done if Webster had returned normally?"

2. Early on the 21st, after trying to reach Cochran unsuccessfully on the afternoon of the 20th to find that his line was busy, Rittenburg telephoned the latter regarding this matter. Rittenburg had a secretary make notes on the call, unwitting to Cochran. Cochran's first question, after the usual "hello", was "Do you have the answers to those questions?" Rittenburg informed him, "I don't know anything about this man, only what I have read in the newspapers". He asked, "Nothing official?" to which Rittenburg reiterated "No, only what I have followed in the press". Cochran went on to say that "It turned out it's not as bad as it looks on the surface. He had no access to classified material". During the conversation Rittenburg informed Cochran that he had tried to telephone the previous afternoon, but had found the telephone busy. He also expressed his regret that he had not been in for Cochran's visit and pointed out that the latter should have telephoned ahead. Rittenburg said that he was sorry that he couldn't be of any help in the matter, to which Cochran replied with "C'est la vie. Well anything I can do for you?" When told "Not at the moment", he stated, "If there is, call me", for which Rittenburg thanked him before saying "Good-bye".

3. It was difficult to understand why Cochran would attempt to make such an approach to the Cleveland office, let alone expect answers to such questions as he put forth.

ESRittenburg:ms

JAMES R. MURPHY

File: Robert E. Webster
Rand Development Corp.
Major R. Cochran, OSI (USAF)

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