February 7, 1964
BY COURIER SERVICE

1 - Belmont
1 - Sullivan
1 - W. L. Smith
1 - Branigan
1 - Lenihan
1 - Lee

Honorable J. Lee Rankin
General Counsel
The President's Commission
200 Maryland Avenue, N. E.
Washington, D. C.

REC'D-READING ROOM
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Dear Mr. Rankin:

In connection with the inquiry of the Commission, we thought that you might be interested in the attached summaries, which deal with two other United States citizens who went to Russia and returned to the United States.

Both of these individuals, Libero Ricciardelli and Robert Edward Webster, have advised that at no time did the Soviets attempt to obtain classified information from them or to recruit them for intelligence work in the United States.

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

BY COURIER SERVICE
COMM-FBI

XEROX
FEB 14 1964

ENCLOSURE

Enclosures 4

- 105-72888 (Ricciardelli)
- 105-81285 (Webster)

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NOTE: Original and one of attached letterheads furnished Commission per its request for two copies of all information furnished.

EX-100 REC-43 62-109090-95

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LIBERO RICCIARDELLI

Libero Ricciardelli lived in Russia from February, 1959, until June, 1963, along with his wife and three children. On his return to the United States, he was interviewed by Agents of this Bureau and furnished information concerning himself and his life in Russia. A summary of these interviews is set forth as follows.

Ricciardelli was born in Needham, Massachusetts, June 18, 1917, and was educated through the tenth grade. After serving in the United States Army Air Corps from 1942 to 1947, he was demobilized and became a plasterer. He married in 1944 and has three children born in 1946, 1948, and 1950.

In 1953 Ricciardelli was having domestic problems and when his wife refused to visit a psychiatrist, he began unsupervised reading in the fields of psychology and philosophy. As a result, he decided to take his wife and three children on a visit to Russia, a socialistic state. They traveled to Russia February, 1959, on round-trip tickets.

After arriving in Moscow, Ricciardelli ran out of money in a short time and then became hospitalized for a period of 21 days. When he returned from the hospital arrangements were made with the International Red Cross for financial assistance. Ricciardelli stated that during the next few months his family problems, mental worries, and poor health caused him to become mentally disturbed. Finally, his wife stated that she was going to return with the children to the United States and at this time Ricciardelli decided to stay in Russia. By this act he felt that he was cutting away from the past and was also making certain that his children would be given an education. He requested that he be sent to a climate more beneficial to his health and he was sent to Kiev. His wife and children refused to accept Soviet passports.

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1 - 105-72888 (Ricciardelli)
1 - 105-81285 (Webster)

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ENCLOSURE

Liboro Ricciardelli

In the Summer of 1960 Ricciardelli was on vacation in a Russian Government vacation resort. One night he stayed out of the hotel after midnight and found himself locked out. When he attempted to climb the wall and enter the hotel by the balcony, he was stopped by a policeman who demanded an explanation. This act made Ricciardelli feel that he was actually in prison rather than on a vacation.

As a result of his general disappointment with life in Russia and the above incident, he and his wife began to plan to leave the Soviet Union. They decided to go to Czechoslovakia which they considered to be more Westernized than any of the other satellites. He visited the Czechoslovakian Embassy in Moscow and applied for visas to enter that country. After a period of complete confusion for the next two years, Ricciardelli was finally informed that visas would be granted for travel to Czechoslovakia. However, they were then informed by the Soviet Government that they would not be permitted to leave the Soviet Union.

In August, 1962, Mrs. Ricciardelli decided she would return to the home of her parents in Illinois and Ricciardelli would return to the home of his parents in Massachusetts. Since Mrs. Ricciardelli still had her American passport, she was able to leave Russia on March 27, 1963.

When Riociardelli applied for his passport at the American Embassy in Moscow, he was told that he was no longer an American citizen. He then filed an application for a visa to return as an alien to the United States. The visa was issued on June 14, 1963, but he was required to remain in Moscow for fourteen days because of confusion over the status of his oldest daughter's citizenship. His problem was finally resolved and he left Russia June 28, 1963.

At no time did anyone ever ask Ricciardelli anything about his service in the United States Air Force. In addition, no attempt was made to have him join the Communist Party. He was requested on several occasions to make a speech to groups of workers at the plant where he was employed but he refused to do so. He was urged to vote in Soviet elections but he never did so. Before his departure from Russia he was not interviewed by any official of the Russian Government nor by any members of the Soviet press. At no time did anyone ever attempt to recruit him to act on behalf of the Soviet Government after his return to the United States.

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ROBERT EDWARD WEBSTER

Robert Webster lived in Russia from August, 1959, until May, 1962, when he returned to the United States. He has been interviewed by this Bureau and the following is a summary of the information he furnished.

Webster was born October 23, 1928, at Tiffin, Ohio. He served in the United States Navy from August, 1947, until May, 1950. In November, 1957, he began employment with the Rand Development Company, Cleveland, Ohio.

In 1959 Webster made three trips to Russia to represent his employer at the American National Exhibition in Moscow. In March, 1959, he was in Moscow for one week, in May, 1959, and June, 1959, he was there for seven weeks and his third visit began in July, 1959. At this time he was married and the father of two children. During his third trip to Russia, he requested permission to remain there.

The thought of remaining in Russia came to Webster during his second trip in 1959; however, at that time he made no effort to remain there. Shortly after his arrival in Moscow in July, 1959, he discussed this with Alexander Shiskin, an English-speaking Russian official at the exhibition, and Shiskin arranged for an interview with one Popof. At this meeting Webster filled out a questionnaire furnishing his background and expressing his wish to remain in Russia to better himself in the plastics industry. Popof did not accept this reason and Webster then changed it to state that he wanted to stay in Russia since all business in the United States was controlled by the Government.

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Webster was interviewed on four occasions by Popof and other persons. The interviews were aimed at determining if Webster was certain that he wanted to stay in Russia and to determine his technical qualifications and experience. Three days before he was scheduled to leave Russia, he received permission to remain there. In company with a male Intourist guide, he traveled to Leningrad, Russia.

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105-81285
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1 - 105-72888 (Ricciardelli)
1 - 105-81285 (Webster)

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ENCLOSURE

Robert Edward Webster

Webster has stated that his decision to remain in Russia was based on several things. First, he desired to escape his family responsibilities in the United States. Secondly, his wife had objected to the travel necessitated by his job and, finally, he was seriously in debt.

In addition to the above reasons, when Webster was in Moscow on his second trip, he had met one Vera Platonova, who was separated from her husband. Their friendship was surreptitious, as Soviet nationals were not supposed to mingle with foreigners. After Webster had received permission to remain in Russia and had been in Leningrad for two weeks, he was permitted to telephone Platonova and she was permitted to visit him in Leningrad. Webster then traveled to Moscow where he officially renounced his American citizenship to American officials and then went on a one-month vacation with Platonova.

After this vacation Webster and Platonova returned to Leningrad and he became employed at the Plastics Institute, with Platonova as his interpreter. His job was to establish a Fiberglas Department since there was none in the institute. During this time he and Platonova resided in a common-law relationship which resulted in a daughter being born on August 18, 1960. He also attempted to design a Fiberglas resin depositor, but due to the lack of parts and equipment, the machine did not work.

About December of 1959 Webster received a letter from his father informing him that his mother had suffered a mental breakdown and that he was needed at home. This letter disturbed Webster and in May, 1960, he traveled to Moscow accompanied by Platonova on official business. While in Moscow he contacted the American Embassy to determine the necessary procedure to return to the United States. When he returned to Leningrad, he began steps to obtain the required Soviet documents and in August, 1960, made his first application for a Soviet exit visa. About two months later he was told the request had been denied and that he would have to wait one year before reapplying. One year later he again made an application and the exit visa was granted in February, 1962. On March 12, 1962, the American Embassy advised him that his Soviet exit visa was approved and he was given instructions regarding the obtaining of an American visa.

Regarding his efforts to leave Russia, Webster stated that Vera Platonova made no effort to persuade him to remain in the Soviet Union, but she assisted him in preparing forms and obtaining various documents which he needed. When it became known that Webster wanted to leave Russia, two men from Moscow interviewed him for about fifteen minutes and asked him to reconsider his decision. He told these men he wanted to return to his wife and children and to see his sick mother. No pressure was exerted on him and no political matters were discussed.

Webster has stated that he was not aware of any participation of Soviet intelligence personnel in his interviews or otherwise either before or after his defection. He was not aware if Vera Platonova was ever contacted by Soviet intelligence. Further, to the best of his knowledge Soviet intelligence exhibited no interest in him before his departure to the United States. No requests were made of him and no agreements were made in return for his exit visa. The only question concerning American defense matters occurred when some engineers from Moscow asked him what Government work was handled in the Rand Company and Webster denied any knowledge of this, which he said was true.

Webster arrived back in the United States on May 20, 1962, as an alien admitted under the Russian quota.