

April 5, 1980

MEMORANDUM ON SOUETRE/MERTZ

Background

In the spring of 1964, General De Gaulle was scheduled to make a trip to Mexico. In planning security for the visit, the French Secret Service (SDECE) queried the FBI (who in turn queried the CIA and INS) about the "expulsion" from Texas on November 23, 1963, of JEAN RENE SOUETRE. According to SDECE, Souetre was a deserter from the French Army, a violent OAS sympathizer, and a known assassin. Again according to the SDECE, Souetre was also known as Michael Roux and Michael Mertz. Souetre was alleged to have been in Ft. Worth on the morning of November 22, 1963; in Dallas that afternoon; and he was "expelled" on November 23rd to either Mexico or Canada.

Nothing is known as to Michael Roux. However, Michael Mertz (whose full name is Michael Victor Mertz) was a long time associate of Souetre, and he is known to have used Souetre's name the same way that Souetre used his. Whereas Souetre appears to be genuine OAS, Mertz was an SDECE agent penetrating OAS, i.e., a phoney OAS sympathizer. Because of this confusion of background, and because it is not clear which of the Frenchmen was in Texas on November 22nd, we have done a background study on both.

JEAN RENE SOUETRE

Souetre was born on October 15, 1930, in the Gironde Department. He is reported to have married a girl from a well-to-do Bordeaux family.

In 1953, Souetre was connected with security for the French Fourth Airforce. His rank was Captain. He is reported to have been in Algiers 1955-1959. He deserted from the French Army (Air Force?) and became an activist in the OAS.

As an OAS activist, Souetre was arrested (tried?) and confined in a detention camp, from which he escaped in 1961. He is alleged to have participated in an attempt on the life of De Gaulle [details unknown]. In May, 1963, he was working for the OAS in "foreign affairs." He travelled on several passports, including a U.S. passport. He claimed to be documented as a naturalized citizen from Martinique.

If he was in Dallas in November, 1963, the reason is unknown. On March 5, 1964, INS searched its files on Souetre and said they came up with nothing on him or his aliases Roux and Mertz. However, as of that time the CIA had a photograph of him, and, presumably, they had a file on him.

In 1953, while in the U.S. Air Force, a Houston dentist, Lawrence M. Alderson, became friendly with Souetre. During the next ten years, they swapped Christmas cards, etc., but apparently had no occasion or reason to meet. The SDECE appears to have

informed the FBI in March, 1964, of the friendship, and, in connection with the projected De Gaulle visit to Mexico, the FBI interviewed Alderson, but did not learn anything very interesting. However, if Dr. Alderson is to be believed, the FBI came and talked to him "shortly" after the assassination (certainly before March, 1964) and told him they believed Souetre killed JFK or knew who did; they asked Alderson if he knew who in Washington had had Souetre flown out of the country. [If the FBI is to be believed, there does not appear to be anything terribly significant about the Alderson matter; but, if Alderson is to be believed, it is very significant.]

MICHAEL VICTOR MERTZ

Mertz was born in the Moselle area in about 1921. He was inducted into the German Army in 1941 but deserted in 1943. He joined the Resistance in the Limoges area and became a genuine hero. His nom de guerre was Commandante Baptiste. He is alleged to have killed twenty Gestapo members, captured four hundred plus Germans, and to have escaped from the Nazis on four occasions.

After the War, he married Paule Scheller Martel, the adopted daughter of Charles Martel, the owner/operator of the Spinx, a well-known Paris brothel. He joined the SDECE and served in Germany, Turkey, and Morocco, using the cover of an Army Captain. He is alleged to be a professional killer and to have worked directly under Alexandre Sanguinetti and Jacques Foccart . . . .

as such he was an "untouchable."

In addition to his SDECE work, he was also heavily into narcotics smuggling with his father-in-law, and with Joe Attia, another professional killer and SDECE agent (now deceased).

On March 11, 1961, he sailed on the Liberte for New York, with a heroin-laden Citroen in the hold of the ship. However, in April, 1961, he was ordered back to France by the SDECE to infiltrate the OAS. He was sent to Algiers as a French Captain, and in June, 1961, he was arrested as an OAS sympathizer. On July 11, 1961, he was sent to a detention camp. [Query: did he see Souetre there?] His OAS "number" was 5762.

As a double agent for the SDECE, he helped set up the "phoney" attempt on De Gaulle's life at Pont-Sur-Seine. When the other conspirators went on trial on September 8, 1961, that very day Mertz and family flew to Canada, courtesy of SDECE. However, he was back in France as early as October 11, 1961, reestablishing his narcotics trade.

From 1961-1969, he moved narcotics, large quantities, from France to North America, making a fortune. He had bank accounts in New York and Switzerland. He established "cover" in New York in the form of a company that arranged rebuilding of engines for the French Military.

Mertz was arrested in France on November 24, 1969, as leader of the Bousquet narcotics ring. He was convicted on July 5, 1971,

to five years. It is believed that he served only a short time.

Mertz is alleged to speak almost perfect English and Spanish. He was closely connected in smuggling ventures with Achille Cecchini and Jean Nebbia.

#### QUESTIONS

Assuming that either Souetre or Mertz was expelled on November 23rd, here are just a few of the questions raised:

1. What was he doing in Texas?
2. Why was he expelled?
3. Expelled by whom?
4. Expelled at whose behest?
5. Expelled to what place and by what means?
6. Who is Michael Roux?
7. Are either or both of Souetre and Mertz alive, and, if so, where are they today?
8. How much of the Soutre/Mertz story was passed along to the Warren Commission?