

FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM

SECURITY : **CONFIDENTIAL**

TO : Department of State

FROM : **AMERICAN CONSUL, SALZBURG, AUSTRIA** July 31, 1951

REF : **Consulate's OM 7, July 9, 1951.**

SUBJECT : **PERSONNEL, Other Agencies: Dr. Ilona Scott**

This memorandum is being submitted in lieu of an efficiency report on a representative of another agency, as prescribed in FS Personnel Circular No. 54, August 15, 1950, Sect. 13.1. The unavailability of forms here or in Vienna, plus some urgency in forwarding the information to Washington is the reason for this procedure.

No previous report was submitted by this office, since it was apparently not informed of Dr. Ilona Scott's assignment to the Consulate, the assumption being that she was assigned at the request of the Displaced Persons Commission. Such, at least, would be in consonance with Dr. Scott's own attitude, save where supplies or other logistical support was concerned.

Superficially, Dr. Scott gave the impression of having done a good job of organizing a difficult operation, and certainly the number of visa applicants examined under difficult conditions was impressive. She arrived in Salzburg on April 15, 1949, and I daresay faced a confused situation. I am not aware of the full details, but upon my arrival, November 27, 1949, the installation was still suffering from confusion, a lack of space and, apparently, qualified personnel. The truth of the matter is that there was terrific pressure from the regular Displaced Persons program, and with the build-up of the Ethnic German program (then handled by the Consulate rather than the DP Visa Sub-Office) the pressure became even greater. At the same time, it became extremely difficult for the Consulate to obtain the prompt examination of its regular visa applicants and its Ethnic Germans, until finally after two or three months of jockeying, it was agreed that Dr. Scott would accept up to 20 cases from the Consulate daily. She lived up to this agreement fairly well, and thereafter the cases moved with somewhat greater regularity. Up to that point, however, Dr. Scott's relations with almost every visa officer of the Consulate were frequently strained. The fault was not entirely hers, of course,

CONFIDENTIAL

but she is of a nervous and excitable nature, and it may well be assumed that her difficulty with the English language and a rather European evaluation of her own authority did little to endear her to those with whom she had to deal. The Consulate received numerous verbal complaints from members of the Armed Forces, for instance, over the discourtesy with which their Austrian brides were received by the USPHS. The general burden was: "Who does that Hungarian think she is, pushing our wives around!" I personally, and the other officers of the Consulate, tried to soothe injured feelings by explaining that USPHS examinations were conducted on a somewhat different basis than those in the Army hospitals and that regulations governing the interpretation of X-Rays were different, etc. Feeling that perhaps some of the difficulty stemmed from extreme pressure and lack of qualified personnel, I offered to assist in any way I could in obtaining the assignment of additional American personnel. This offer was rather brusquely rejected, and I was somewhat puzzled as to why. I was not aware that Dr. Scott was not a "commissioned" surgeon and had been hired under a provision of USPHS regulations permitting the hiring outside the United States of unlicensed physicians. She was naturally apprehensive lest the addition of an American doctor would result in the new arrival being placed over her, which would be embarrassing, since she and her husband liked to give the impression that she was an "officer" and in complete charge of things in Austria.

During 1950, I began to hear rumors (sometimes through Army Intelligence, sometimes through DP sources) that Dr. Scott was strongly inclined to give favorable treatment to Hungarian immigrants at the expense of others and that for a few hundred schillings one could get himself passed in spite of an earlier adverse decision. Dr. Walter G. Nelson, Medical Director, USPHS, Paris, discussed these rumors with me and himself made several investigations into them. Nothing was ever proved, but it is understood that one or two of the alien doctors may have been dismissed for taking bribes. I was not inclined to give too much credence to the rumors myself, for Salzburg with its large Displaced Person population is a hot-bed of rumor and intrigue. I was, however, much disturbed over the reports of discourtesy, mistreatment of employees and efforts to put anybody in the wrong who even questioned her methods of operation.

Before the matter developed to a point where I had to intervene directly, the Public Health Service assigned a young commissioned surgeon to Salzburg, toward the end of 1950. Dr. Henry W. Blackburn, Jr., the new surgeon, has from the beginning impressed me as diligent, able and of agreeable personality. He did not, until recently, consult me in any way or even imply that he was having difficulties with Dr. Scott, but it was relatively easy to ascertain that his experience was not exactly a happy one. Upon the departure of Mr. Elmore A. Scott, clerk in the Consulate (see reference), on home leave in June, he was accompanied by his wife, Dr. Scott. I had no idea at

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

the time that she was to be separated from the Service, but if this step had not been taken, I should have been compelled to request that she not be returned to Salzburg, at least in any senior capacity, because of the rather poor reputation her office was acquiring.

Because Dr. Blackburn's experience with Dr. Scott permitted him to make a more direct and detailed observation, I have asked him to prepare a resume of events within his office since his arrival. His statement is quoted below, in toto, with his permission:

"Dear Mr. Affeld:

"This information is forwarded in response to your request for further details on the function of Dr. Ilona Scott as Medical Officer in the Salzburg USPHS station. I trust its length will not be too formidable. Where the facts have been reported to the Chief European Officer for PH² it will be indicated.

"It is my information, in a letter from our Paris office of May 25, 1951, that Dr. Scott was separated from the service at the end of activities, June 15, 1951. A subsequent letter of June 14 informed me that Dr. Scott was to be carried on annual leave by the Paris station until July 15.

"On reporting to this office after my visit to you on October 16, 1950, I was welcomed by an attitude of complete obstruction and hostility. Dr. Scott would not brief me in any way on the activities of this unit, and stated that she found it impossible to introduce me to any of the officers and agencies related to our program.

"In the Salzburg office I found that the entire weight of medical examinations and virtually all medical decisions had been and were being carried by the alien physician, Dr. Mezaros. The function of Dr. Scott, as evidenced in her treatment of the staff and the disposition of individual problems displayed the fullest possible autocratic rule and lack of tact.

"During my first tour of Austrian units in the DP Program I found that Dr. Scott had visited Vienna, Linz, and Villach each once, Innsbruck twice, and Kapfenburg never in her 18 months of supervision of the areas. The conditions for examinations were totally disorganized and deplorable, and there were several hundreds of backlog, undecided deferred cases. On October 30 I

CONFIDENTIAL

wrote a report to Dr. Nelson.

"The report to Dr. Nelson was received 12 days after it was posted with my secretary. It had been sealed and marked personal. She was ordered by Dr. Scott to remain after duty to open the letter, and when she refused, the letter was opened by Dr. Scott, read, replaced in a new envelop, and delayed in transmittal. It is a further absolute fact that subsequent letters were opened, both personal and official, some unopened but read through Xray Viewers, and that my personal files were rifled on every possible occasion when they were unlocked and I was out of the office. Dr. Nelson was informed of the mail being opened.

"Subsequently, there has been a train of petty circumstances, of more or less seriousness, directed toward thwarting and embarrassing the work here. In one instance, though the date for my marriage was long announced, and the leave granted, Dr. Scott threatened to become sick and have an elective operation during this time, thus leaving the station uncovered. His plan was dissolved only at the last minute by a direct order from Paris.

"A satisfactory sharing of responsibility and working agreement was never achieved between us, and I was unable to reverse the initial poor relationship. On March 13, 1951, I wrote a final and urgent letter requesting the immediate transfer of Dr. Scott, with the alternative a transfer for myself, assuming the responsibility for not establishing a satisfactory situation, but insisted on its alleviation. By this time the personal situation was weighing on me so heavily that I felt our association must be quickly ended.

"Her obstruction became more desperate in the last weeks, though it had no important effect on our program. Two cases, for which I was called to testify by immigration authorities, disappeared from our files. The preceding day Dr. Scott informed our Dr. Reichl that she was taking several cases to Washington to "make trouble". They reappeared in our files when I gave her warning that no cases were to be removed under any circumstances. Her last remarks to our employees here were of a similar nature to those you have heard. I have gone under the assumption that she is no longer in the service (which may or may not be final), and that any formal criticism could be squarely met, any underhanded methods being beyond my control. However, being aware of her cleverness, a report from you would be effective in calling the attention of Washington to her behavior.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 5 -

"At the same time that I received notice of her separation from Paris I was forwarded the routine Civil Service Performance Rating Report to be completed on Dr. Scott. On the basis of character and ethical standards my report could not be satisfactory. After my long association with her I found her great caution in covering her medical deficiencies with advice from IRO physicians and expensive special examinations in cases which required her signature. According to our records there has been no report made on Dr. Scott in the long interval since September 1949, at which time the Paris Office sent a report of Satisfactory. I notified Paris at once that on the grounds of the above facts my report would be unsatisfactory, and stated in addition, that my personal feelings were such as to preclude a completely objective report. The Paris office ordered the forms returned uncompleted, and it is assumed they were filled in there.

"The situation has been fraught with personal problems, encountered to some extent in every life situation. Seldom are such situations not amenable to logical and fair resolution, as failed in this one. I will be happy to see you personally at your convenience."

S/ Henry W. Blackburn, Jr.
Henry W. Blackburn, Jr. A Surg R

In view of the foregoing and because of the apparent inability to meet professional and ethical standards, I find it extremely difficult to accord Dr. Scott any rating above "Unsatisfactory". and I hereby faced a difficult situation. I am not aware of the full details, but upon my arrival, September 27, 1949, the installation was still recovering from confusion, a lack of space and, apparently, pollution for example. The truth of the matter is that there was a serious problem from the regular scheduled services program, and with the withdrawal of the service program which was needed by the installation. It was the only way to keep the program from becoming even greater. At the same time, to reduce extremely difficult for the Committee to obtain the prompt completion of its regular scheduled services and its other programs, until finally after two or three months of hesitation, it was agreed that Dr. Scott would accept up to 20 cases from the installation daily. She lived up to this agreement fairly well, and thereafter the cases were sent with somewhat greater regularity. Up to that point, however, Dr. Scott's relations with almost every vice officer of the Committee were professionally strained. Her final was not entirely true, of course.

CONFIDENTIAL