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16 April 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Briefing of Jackson Committee on 29 April

Here are some suggestions as to statements which you might wish to make to the Jackson Committee in your discussion on 29 April. I have numbered them in accordance with the numbers used by Robert Blum in his letter to you of 3 April.

1. Covert operations should be an adjunct of foreign policy to accomplish those objectives of the highest priority which cannot be accomplished by overt means. It is essential that those persons concerned with foreign policy, particularly high ranking military officers, understand at least the basic fundamentals concerning covert operations. These fundamentals are that covert operations in most instances are extremely delicate and difficult to mount and require considerable time for the planning and mounting. Thus, covert operations should generally never be used in emergency situations unless the hand of the United States can be revealed and consequently should only be used for backing long term plans so that sufficient time can be allowed for careful planning and mounting. The principal scope and problem of covert operations in relation to foreign policy as a whole, should be to provide the intelligence information necessary to insure that the foreign policy is wisely conceived and correctly directed. Sound and adequate intelligence information is not only necessary for the support of foreign policy, but is also a requirement for successful covert operations. Further, covert operations should never be mounted unless there is adequate intelligence information to fully support the operations and give reasonable assurance of their success.

2. Our present ability to conduct successful covert operations is limited by two principal factors. These are: limited intelligence information in the most critical areas where covert operations are needed; and secondly, too few trained professional personnel in the field of covert operations. With the passage of time both of these limiting factors are being gradually eliminated. However, it will be a number of years before the ability of the United States to conduct covert operations approximates that of other countries who are more experienced in the field, particularly the Soviet Union.

3. To a large extent the organization and control of covert operations should be vested in the headquarters in Washington. This is necessitated to a certain degree by the necessity of utilizing the central files of a worldwide counterespionage system. It is also advisable so that the operations can be manipulated to conform to modifications or changes in policy. On the other hand, senior officers in the field should be given sufficient authority to modify covert

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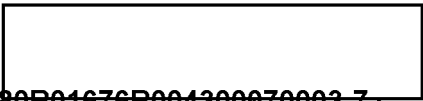
operations to fit changing situations. However, these senior officers should keep Washington fully advised of all actions which they take upon their own initiative.

I feel very strongly that the CIA should have the full responsibility for all covert operations conducted by the government. To allow another government agency or agencies to enter the field of covert operations without the benefit of CIA's counterespionage files would be an invitation to continued blunders and fiascos. This is particularly true in view of the limited number of potential agents for operations in the more critical areas of the world.

In Washington, the CIA should work closely with the Department of State as far as policy guidance and direction on covert operations. State should be generally advised concerning covert operations. The same is true concerning the senior diplomatic representatives throughout the world.

4. It is my opinion that, generally speaking, the policy followed by the Voice of America for beaming to the world strictly factual information concerning the successes and the failures, the good and the evil of the United States, has not been successful. While I believe that as an honest republic we should not make any attempt to hide our failings from the rest of the world, I do feel that to air it on our own propaganda mechanism is a serious error. Consequently, I believe that the VOA has failed to accomplish as much as could have been accomplished had it been supported by a gray propaganda system which could handle considerable material that VOA could never touch. I think that gray propaganda should be very closely associated in its preparation with white propaganda. Therefore, there appears to be no major reason why the same agency could not be responsible for both. However, where gray propaganda must be disseminated through covert means then that agency should undoubtedly utilize the facilities of CIA.

5. Psychological warfare is a technique. It is a technique of gaining mens minds through the utilization of all facilities of communication. It should not distort foreign policy if properly conceived and executed. As a consequence, it would be my recommendation that the Psychological Strategy Board be reconstituted as a sub-committee of the National Security Council. The board would be composed of the same members as at present, plus the head of any new propaganda agency. The board would receive its policy guidance from the National Security Council and would utilize a small staff contributed by the member agencies for guidance as to the implementation of the policy. In other words, the staff of the Psychological Strategy Board would recommend to the board the possible actions that could be taken by the various member agencies to assist in the implementation of foreign policy. Member agencies would act in the field of covert operations and psychological warfare only after direction by the Psychological Strategy Board which would keep the National Security Council advised of its actions.

  
Zyhan B. Kirkpatrick  
Inspector General

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