Approved For Release 2000/05/16 : CIA-RDP81-00261R000700010030-5

23 February 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Employee Concerns About Fitness Report Evaluations

1. For some time, the Management Advisory Group has been considering ways in which the current Fitness Report system could be improved. Although the DDO MAG initially called this subject to our attention, concern about Fitness Reports appears to be widespread among employees in every Directorate.

2. As we perceive them, employee concerns lie not so much in the design of the rating system itself, but in the variety of ways supervisors interpret and apply the evaluation standards. These concerns are borne out by statistical evidence that shows what we believe to be unrealistic differences in the distributions of ratings among the four Directorates, unrealistic differences within components of the same Directorate, and other deviations that seriously degrade the utility of the letter grades. The deficiencies have long been recognized, and the ranking panel system that now exists in every Directorate was in part established to counterbalance the inequities, but its degree of success is unclear.

3. Better supervisor training could serve, some believe, as a vehicle for improving rating objectivity. The one course devoted exclusively to the subject is a two-day "Performance Evaluation Workshop" offered by OTR on request. Fitness reporting and Letters of Instruction are also addressed for one day during the five-day "Fundamentals of Supervision and Management" offered ten times during 1975. Clearly, the present course offerings provide information only to a fraction of the pool of supervisory personnel, and no data are available on their effectiveness.

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4. MAG believes that concerns about the lack of uniformity in the application of Fitness Report evaluation criteria are justified and that improved means of describing employee performance should be considered. We have met with representatives of the Directorate MAGs who share our concerns in this area. We recognize that any substantial change in the approach taken would have far-reaching ramifications, and while we are not wihout ideas, we are reluctant to make proposals in the absence of fuller appreciation of their implications. We recommend that a task force be formed to review the efficacy of performance evaluation in the Agency. We believe such a task force should be headed by senior officers from each Directorate and include administrative and line personnel in middle and lower grade levels.

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The Management Advisory Group

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