Approved For Release 2006/11/27 : CIA-RDP81M00980R001800060021-4

OLC 78-3104 DDO

19 October 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations

FROM : Frederick P. Hitz
Legislative Counsel

SUBJECT : Request by Thomas Latimer to Discuss Quality of Young Officers Coming into the Clandestine Service

1. (C) Thomas K. Latimer, Staff Director, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, requested a 20-30 minute meeting with you sometime in the next two weeks. He wishes to get your impressions on the quality of the young officers coming into the DDO. On the one hand he has heard from former DCI William Colby that the number and quality of applicants to the Agency has never been higher. On the other hand he has heard from some of the "old hands" within the DDO that the quality and numbers coming into the DDO are not all that they might be.

2. (S) In my view, he is confusing some different, although related, issues. Those are:

a. He has heard that the Agency (specifically the DDO) is losing (through pink slips and retirement) language talents and counter-intelligence expertise. He has also heard that it will take some years to tool up those currently on board and those coming in to replace that which we have lost and are losing through pink slips and retirements.

b. He has heard that the DCI has insisted that the Career Trainee classes be enlarged -- significantly. He has also heard that the Office of Personnel is having trouble in finding as many qualified candidates as the enlarged objectives of the DCI call for.

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c. He has heard former DCI Colby talk about the vast numbers of applicants for Agency employment and the high quality of those applicants.

d. He has also heard that the incoming officer of today is differently (less idealistically) motivated than were those who entered on duty twenty and more years ago.

e. Lastly, he has heard that certain language capabilities are drying up on us -- this in particular regard to Chinese and other exotic languages for which native dominance is needed in order to process tapes from technical operations, etc.

3. (C) Thus, while Mr. Latimer's questions are about the Career Trainees, I think that you will find that the essence of his concerns is whether the DDO has sufficient expertise in certain linguistic and professionally specialized areas to continue to perform the job that is expected of it. Obviously, the backgrounds and skills that CTs bring into the DDO bear on the problem; as do the inevitable retirements of individuals with specialized and frequently unique skills.

4. (U) Please advise me of your availability to meet with Mr. Latimer sometime in the next two weeks. He fully appreciates the fact that you are busier than he and wants to accommodate your schedule.

SIGNED

Frederick P. Hitz

cc: Donald P. Gregg (C/PCS/LOC)
[redacted] (DDA)

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Orig - adse
1 - OLC Subject
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OLC:MMP:sf (20 October 1978)

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