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# Notes from the Director No. 25

7 June 1978

## UNIFORM PROMOTION SYSTEM

1. One area which we are giving a great deal of attention today is our personnel management system. For the past 31 years, the Agency has had a fine and highly personalized management system. It could not be otherwise for we simply could not carry out our mission without good people. This more than any other factor has been the secret of success of our Agency since its birth.

2. Times change, the mores of our country change, and the attitudes and aspirations of our youth change. In addition, our Agency is in a sense just reaching its maturity. Personnel policies appropriate to a new and growing organization need review for an established organization. No earthshaking changes are contemplated, but we are endeavoring to ensure that our personnel policies and our personnel management procedures are attuned to looking after the interests of all of our employees under conditions which surround us today and will surround us in the years just ahead.

3. On the 18th day of May we published a notice on an approach to a uniform promotion system. I believe this notice is of sufficient import to all employees to include it in a Director's Note so that it will receive maximum distribution. Here it is:

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PERSONNEL

18 May 1978

### UNIFORM PROMOTION SYSTEM

1. Many of the personnel policies of the Agency have been and are being carefully reexamined. One of the conclusions is that employees and the Agency will benefit from the adoption of a more uniform promotion system throughout the Agency. The adoption of such a system will increase employees awareness of promotion opportunities and will ensure more promotion headroom by implementing existing Agency regulations concerning marginal performers. It is recognized that each Career Service has unique characteristics and problems which require consideration. Modifications of the Agency's promotion system will allow recognition of that uniqueness by the use of more expanded statements of promotion criteria for each Career Service.

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2. The establishment of uniform promotion schedules by grade will be keyed to the scheduling of fitness reports followed by panel evaluations and by recommendations for promotions. The intention is to have the whole system ready for implementation beginning 1 October 1978. Meanwhile, actions are already being taken to incorporate each new feature as it is developed into the Agency's promotion system. These will include the following:

a. A minimum annual target for promotion of qualified people for each grade will be established by appropriate Career Services or Sub-Groups and published. This action will be completed in June.

b. Promotion rates will be sustained for the most part through normal attrition, but additionally it will be necessary to adhere more strictly to the current separation regulation [redacted] subsequent to identifying the bottom three percent of employees competitively ranked each year. As a protection to the employees identified in this process, the Career Service will establish independent panels to review each case on its merit. The panels will assess the employee's value and potential. Their findings will be furnished to the Head of the Career Service.

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c. The common criteria for promotion in all Career Services are set forth in [redacted] Specific Career Service criteria will be published and made available to further the employee's understanding of how selection for promotion is achieved and how to become qualified for promotion.

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d. All Career Services will use an evaluation panel system to determine promotion eligibility. Rankings and recommendations for promotion made by an evaluation panel can only be changed by the Director.

e. A uniform promotion schedule for all Career Services (i.e., all GS-09's will be promoted in the same month, etc.) will be established and published. The Office of Personnel will work with the Heads of the Career Services in establishing a schedule for each grade. Promotion lists will be published.

Frank C. Carlucci
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

4. Of equal importance to promotion policy in any personnel management system is retention policy or the rights of individuals to job security. The rules of our Agency on job security are quite clear and longstanding. I will list them below and in italics note any changes of emphasis or procedure which I am directing:

a. Probationary period: Headquarters [redacted] establishes a three-year probationary period upon initial employment. It is important to the employee, as well as to the Agency, that this be carefully administered. It is the period in which the Agency has the opportunity and the responsibility to identify employees who are unlikely to satisfactorily adapt to Agency life. It is in their interest and the Agency's not to let what is likely to be an unfruitful relationship continue. It is my observation that the move from probationary to career status has been too perfunctory. ***We are going to establish a more formal approach to the crossing of the probationary threshold.***

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b. Unsuitability: The National Security Act of 1947 provides that the Director may "in his discretion, terminate the employment of any officer or



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employee of the Agency whenever he shall deem such termination necessary or advisable in the interests of the United States, but such termination shall not affect the right of such officer or employee to seek or accept employment in any other department or agency of the Government if declared eligible by the United States Civil Service Commission." Each Director interprets this authority individually. ***It has been my practice to exercise it primarily for reasons of unreliability.*** When it is determined that an employee has performed in a manner that indicates lack of willingness or ability to perform his or her duties in a manner consistent with authorized directives, oral or written, I must exercise this authority to dismiss from employment. Not to do so would be to jeopardize the reputation and the future of our Agency for the sake of an individual not willing to play on our Agency team.

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c. Low ranking: [redacted] stipulates that an individual ranked in the bottom three percent for two successive years may be considered for dismissal. ***We have recently instituted procedures whereby such cases will be reviewed by special panels to ensure objectivity.*** The panels will look for two situations.

(1) Incompetence: When an individual is performing below an acceptable level of competence, we have no other recourse than dismissal, as is the case in any Government agency.

(2) Low Comparative Value: When the needs of our service dictate reductions in force for reasons such as Congressionally mandated cuts in strength, abolishment of Agency functions, or excess strength in particular areas, the panels will identify the least contributory personnel as required.

Note #1: ***Employees who reach a point three years from eligibility for retirement will not be dismissed on the basis of low comparative performance.***

Note #2: There are no sizeable externally or internally generated reductions foreseeable at this time.

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d. Visibility: [redacted] in addition to making a supervisor responsible for ensuring that employees understand the nature and scope of their duties and responsibilities, also requires the supervisor to continuously advise employees of the effectiveness of their performance. In addition, the Agency personnel management system provides for comparative evaluation with the peer group by grade/function by a Career Service or a Career Service Subgroup panel or board. Employees are entitled to and may inquire of their supervisors as to performance standing. It is my observation that this procedure has not been well carried out in the past. I believe that each employee is entitled to and should seek a frank and specific description of how his performance is being judged. ***Directives will be issued to ensure that employees can and are encouraged to determine their performance rating.*** Equipped with knowledge of where he stands relative to his peers, no career employee need be concerned about dismissal as a result of a poor performance panel evaluation unless he or she is in the very lowest percentile. In short, there can be no concern at "arbitrary" dismissals—the individual is entitled to know where he stands; and he is vulnerable to dismissal only if near the bottom of the list.

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e. Evaluation [redacted] establishes an annual evaluation system based on written fitness reports. I sense considerable skepticism within the Agency that

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fitness reports are filled out conscientiously. ***We have a group studying ways in which to improve fitness report quality. In addition, instructions to panels will stress that single fitness reports are not of great import; judgments must be made on an entire career and what it tells about potential for the future.***

5. It is my intent within a few months to bring together in a booklet form a full statement of personnel policies of the Agency. I believe this is something that all employees are entitled to know, particularly on entering into employment with us. We will try to lay out what a new employee can expect as he looks ahead to a full career opportunity in our Agency, including the opportunities he will have and the rights he will accrue. Most of all, I am anxious that our personnel system be as uniform, as simple, and as thoroughly publicized as possible. Each of us deserves to know the rules and the opportunities within which we serve.

*STANSFIELD TURNER*
Director



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