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16 April 96
PAS-96-0066

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director

FROM: Dennis R. Boxx
Director of Public Affairs

SUBJECT: CIA Television Series

The PAS project to collaborate in the production of a television series based on unclassified CIA file summaries has progressed to the point where it is appropriate to review our commitments and the steps that will be required to ensure the project's success. A planning meeting with the production company, Television Production Partners (TPP), is scheduled for 25 April. I would like to discuss this project with you at the earliest convenience.

Background: The intent of this project, initiated by DCI Woolsey in the spring of 1994, is to expand our use of the entertainment media to promote a realistic and positive public image of CIA and intelligence, to dispel a number of intelligence myths and misperceptions commonly promoted by the entertainment industry, and to support a popular project that would benefit employee morale. TPP was selected as the production company for this project based on its stated interest in developing programming that portrays American institutions in a positive light and due to the extraordinary control it would allow CIA in reviewing the production. This project was briefed to and approved by the CIA EXCOM in December 1994 and a Letter of Agreement between CIA and TPP was signed by Acting DCI Studeman at the end of that month. TPP has recently concluded an agreement with 20th Century Fox Television for the production of a two hour television movie that will serve as the pilot for a potential weekly dramatic series.

Commitments: CIA has agreed to provide TPP with unclassified summaries drawn from actual CIA files that will serve as the bases for story and script development. TPP is authorized to embellish these summaries for dramatic purposes provided the resulting depictions are consistent with US laws and general CIA practices. TPP is considering hiring two former senior Agency officials to serve as technical advisors to review this aspect of the story development. CIA will review and approve or deny all stories and scripts produced. In exchange for this extraordinary control, CIA has granted TPP the right to use the CIA name and seal in the production and to state that the stories are fictional accounts based on actual CIA files. In the event that CIA does not approve a specific script, TPP may either revise the script to address CIA concerns or air the episode without use of the CIA name and seal and include a disclaimer that the episode was not produced with the cooperation of CIA.

Potential: This project presents an unprecedented opportunity for CIA to influence the portrayal of this Agency and US intelligence in a potentially high profile and successful television series reaching millions of Americans. It has been briefed to and has the support of both congressional oversight committees. The extent of CIA control and the commitment of TPP to develop a realistic and positive depiction of CIA greatly increases

the likelihood of an acceptable production as compared to previous entertainment projects in which we have cooperated.

Issues: Efforts over the last two years have focused on structuring an agreement that will ensure protection of CIA equities while also allowing flexibility for creative development. Now that TPP has reached an agreement with a major network, there are a number of issues that must be addressed as the project proceeds toward production. These issues include:

- the ability to refer to fundamental [redacted]
- [redacted] the flexibility to permit references to commonly known facts such as the [redacted]
- [redacted] the ability to allow stories to be set in [redacted]
- [redacted] and,
- the ability to ensure review of scripts within five days.

Furthermore, if the initial two hour pilot is a success and leads to production of a weekly series, we must be in a position to ensure a continuing supply of unclassified synopses incorporating various operational, analytical, administrative, technical, and human interest aspects of the Agency.

Review Process: Throughout the project, PAS must be able to operate with confidence that the information provided and cooperation rendered is consistent with existing CIA policies, procedures, and legal precedents, specifically in the area of official acknowledgments and FOIA decisions. I believe this will require the creation of a small TPP project review body that will have the authority to consider and approve both the unclassified synopses and the resulting scripts. This body must also be able to conduct these reviews within the five day period agreed to with TPP. The proposed review body may include an Associate Deputy Director from each directorate as well as the General Counsel and the Director of Public Affairs.

I would like to discuss this project as soon as possible, perhaps at the next Seniors Meeting, and review the anticipated issues and requirements the project entails. The project is now at a critical stage where CIA management must be in agreement regarding our commitments and flexibility if we are to proceed with development and production.

[redacted]

Dennis R. Boxx