

26 March 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Thomas B. Cormack
Executive Secretary

FROM:
Deputy Chief, History Staff

REFERENCE: Executive Director's Memo of 15 March

SUBJECT: Career Opportunity for Women

1. One contributing cause of the small percentage of women in senior, and specifically supergrade, positions in the Agency is the entrenched image of male, action-oriented leadership. Career panels, engaged in what is essentially a co-option process, tend not to consider adequately the assets and insights that other types of people might bring to the top levels of Agency management.

2. The ultimate route to achieving a proportionate share of responsibility for women lies in an assignment process which will give women throughout their careers the same kind of opportunity to demonstrate ability, gain experience, and win peer acceptance that has been the basis of the male career ladder. Progress is being made in this area, but it remains a long-term solution that does not address the current problem of image discrimination.

3. The record established in the Agency by women who have pioneered in positions previously reserved for males is already sufficient to demonstrate -- contrary to long-held views -- that competent female intelligence officers can command the respect of subordinates, work under difficult conditions, establish rapport with agents and liaison counterparts, handle complex technology, etc. Even so, more women who have won recognition and promotion have been in the fields of research and analysis where their contributions are tangible -- and hence more clearly competitive -- than in fields where evaluations have to be based on intangibles.

4. The suggestion that emerges from the above arguments is that a specific effort be made, when supergrades are being chosen or other personnel decisions at senior levels are being made, to stimulate awareness that simply reproducing the same kind of leadership will have the effect of excluding women, depriving CIA of the full use of its available talent, and perhaps cutting off constructive new ideas.



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