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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Action Operations Unit

Class. CHANGED TO: TS B C

Auth: DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77  
DDA REG. 77/1783

Date: 030278 By: 029

1. Action is recommended in para. 1 with respect to your conclusion that "we should develop a standby task force of experienced personnel for emergency use in critical areas".

BACKGROUND

2. On 5 April 1955 the Director of Training initiated a proposal to organize an Action Operations Unit [redacted] consisting of fifty experienced specialists cross-trained to carry out certain action aspects of covert operations. His proposal received enthusiastic support from the DD/P and from your Special Assistant for Planning and Coordination.

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3. On 11 August 1955 I concurred in the objective of this proposal as it passed through me to the Deputy Director. In concurring, I invited attention to the effect of the proposal upon our overall budgetary situation. You may recall that by the end of the first month of FY 1956 we had already committed two-thirds of our Reserve funds for the entire year. General Cabell expressed enthusiasm about the proposal and a desire to support it and <sup>on 22 August</sup> he requested the development of cost estimates.

4. On 29 September the Director of Training estimated that his proposal, if put into effect at full strength, would entail a capital cost of \$400,000 to \$650,000, and an increase of annual operating expenses of \$30,000 to \$50,000. By this time the Agency began to feel the effects of the recently imposed personnel ceiling, <sup>since</sup> and sufficient doubt existed, within the DD/P, as to whether or not the Action Unit could be staffed, ~~to~~

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~~was~~ the Chief of Operations DD/P<sub>A</sub> <sup>decided</sup> to defer action <sup>on this proposal</sup> until a later date.

DISCUSSION

25X1A6a [REDACTED] 5. The concept of the Action Operations Unit is that, based at [REDACTED] it can be available for movement in an emergency situation for action, and, in normal situations to conduct action training to meet the current requirements of the Clandestine Services, and to pursue the cross-training of members of the Unit to increase their flexibility of employment. In the light of this concept the Director of Training ~~originally~~ proposed to invest twenty action instructor positions (ten civilian and ten military) in the Action Operations Unit. At the time the original proposal was made these positions were all filled with qualified action instructors some of whom have since returned to the Military and the Clandestine Services.

6. As a further means of overcoming the difficulty of the personnel ceiling as it affects the activation of the Unit, the Director of Training now proposes that:

a. You authorize the Director of Training to convert an additional ten vacant military positions, currently within his established personnel ceiling, to civilian positions for transfer to the Action Operations Unit. These positions are to be filled by the Clandestine Services as rapidly as suitably qualified candidates can be found, either among Headquarters, or Overseas returnee personnel.

b. You authorize an increase to the T/O of the Office of Training of an additional twenty civilian positions for the Action operations Unit, as not chargeable against the Headquarters Ceiling. These positions are to be filled by Clandestine Services personnel at the rate of ten in FY 1958 and ten in FY 1959.

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7. AS a result of his trip last Spring the Director of Training became more convinced of the validity of his original proposal. He reports that current planning in DD/P, particularly in the NEA Division, clearly indicates the need for greater emphasis on action training both

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[REDACTED] The existence of such a unit would facilitate fulfillment of these training requirements and provide the Unit with valuable experience in preparation for emergency duty assignments.

8. For your information I am enclosing a copy of the Director of Training's original proposal together with his cost estimate, and the comments on the proposal made by the DD/P and [REDACTED]

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RECOMMENDATIONS

9. In view of the foregoing, and subject to concurrence of the DD/P, I recommend that;

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a. You approve the transfer of 30 action instructor positions (20 military and 10 civilian) which are currently within the OTR personnel ceiling [REDACTED] to the proposed Action Operations Unit; and the conversion of ten of the military positions to civilian positions.

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b. You authorize the establishment of 20 additional civilian personnel positions for the Action Operations Unit in the Office of Training [REDACTED]

T/O as not chargeable against the Headquarters ceiling.

c. You authorize the provision of funds required to meet the capital and annual operating costs of facilities for the Unit in appropriate Budgetary submittals.

L.K. WHITE  
Deputy Director  
(Support)

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