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Report
Memo for Record File

24 March 1960

CONTRIBUTIONS TO POWER POSITIONS PROJECT

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PARTICIPATING: 

This meeting was held for the purpose of discussing geographic elements of national power and to select those which were significant in helping to assess relative "Free World" vs. Sino-Soviet Bloc power positions.

A list of eleven elements considered to be basic and geographic was presented as a discussion target. Many of the items were "standard" but after prolonged discussion it was decided that elements such as climate, natural resources and their development, population, transportation and communication, stages of cultural, economic, and technological development were geographic only in so far as any space-location aspects of them were concerned. These elements in so far as their power relationships were concerned could be best handled by specialists in those fields, even though the geographer does recognize their significance and inter-relationships. A few of the elements on the list were determined to be truly geographic and as such could legitimately be handled by the GRA. Non-nuclear attack is not foreseen at this time on either the "Free World" or the Sino-Soviet Bloc.

The elements that remained as being appropriate for our evaluation were arranged in two groups:

1. Location, size, shape and boundaries

Under this caption the effects of location, size and shape, which all have space-location features, as well as the geographic nature, and implication, of the natural boundaries will be discussed.

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it is not very clear just what the newly proposed Career Development Board would do in detail, the survey does suggest that it would involve itself in recruitment, selection, training, assessment, assignment, and advancement of personnel to carry on the work of the Agency. It is also suggested that -- in addition to policy formulation, guidance and direction to career heads, and an unspecified relationship with the Office of Personnel and the Office of Training -- it would have authority from the DCI for the direct implementation of a career development program. If these functions and powers were granted to such a board, it could cut across and otherwise interfere in the line command performance of these responsibilities as they relate to the accomplishment of organizational missions. Line officials would be quite reluctant to relinquish the responsibilities for selection of professional people needed to support their organization's intelligence mission. In addition, the responsibility they have for getting the intelligence job done leads them to the career development of capable individuals in their components in terms of identifiable needs. The one thing that the line command of specialized functional units does not take into full consideration is the over-all need of the Agency for qualified generalists, who have broad experience gained from a variety of assignments. There is a tendency to look upon a fulfillment of this latter need as a loss of manpower to them. It has generally been established that there are several major needs for a career development program. The one would be to develop people to perform

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the specialized intelligence production functions in the Agency, while the other would be to train highly intelligent and capable people to fill key positions of a generalist type. This office feels that a Career Development Board cannot accomplish the first type of career development as well as the line command, and should only engage in the second type through the development of policy to be followed by already existing line organizational units.

4. Before any real judgment can be made of the recommendations in the survey report, clarification needs to be made of the intelligence officer and key Agency position categories. If these unique types of work could be defined by identifying specific jobs in the Agency, and not in the loose terms used (such as "collectors", "evaluators", "analysts", and "interpreters of information"), it would help to understand just what is meant by the need for personnel to fill Agency key positions.

5. Their proposal to recruit, train, and assign intelligence personnel for the purpose of getting experience to fill Agency key positions does not take into consideration the fact that personnel recruited and trained to perform assigned Agency intelligence functions are equally qualified to develop into key Agency personnel. It makes little sense to exempt professionally competent economists, geographers, scientists, and historians from such positions in favor of a body of

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people who have been brought in without regard to a specific intelligence function and then trained, assigned, and moved along to key positions. Many of the professionally competent intelligence specialists are far more involved in the main stream of national intelligence than any of the so-called "intelligence officer" cadre.

6. The conclusions reached as to who is and who is not an "intelligence officer" is certainly contrary to the experiences of so-called "specialists" -- including economists, historians, political scientists, geographers, and scientists -- who have been in intelligence work for many years. That the authors of the report regard the specialists in intelligence as non-careerists reflects a profound ignorance of the professional cadres of the Agency, who they are, what they do, and -- perhaps most importantly -- how they are regarded in relation to the over-all intelligence process. To name this group of specialists as non-careerists who should not be mingled with true careerists would be to deprive them of career development possibilities outside their own field of specialization, for which many of them are qualified. It would be extremely short-sighted in our view to restrict the selection of people for key positions in the Agency to the so-called "Intelligence Officer" group. We feel that it would be justifiable to predict the hasty departure of the majority of our professional ranks if this kind of personnel policy were adopted. The economic and geographic analysts

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in ORR, with few exceptions, think of themselves first as Intelligence Officers and only secondly as economists, historians, political scientists, geographers or whatever may have been their field of graduate training. They are entirely justified in this view. The Office has repeatedly recognized that no academic course of training in any discipline is designed to prepare one completely for the intelligence profession. The substantial allocation of our manpower to additional formal training in area study, language, industry familiarization, and many highly specialized courses, plus substantial on-the-job training, attests to our efforts to equip our personnel in order that they can perform as well-qualified intelligence officers. We cannot believe that it would be desirable from the Agency's point of view to bequeath the destinies of the Agency ultimately into the hands of those relative few who, by some accident of fate, or possibly through sheer persistence and determination, know only what they have learned while in the employ of the Agency.

7. On page 19 of the report, a number of factors which people consider in determining a career are cited and the general conclusion is given that many of the conditions in CIA mitigate against attracting the kind of people we need. We feel that it should be recognized that a career development program will never be able to change some of these factors. In paragraph 4 of the same page, the statement is made that

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the Agency has little to offer professional employees but valued service to our country. Also, problems of security, psychological factors, and hardship are cited as difficulties in providing the Agency the right kind of people. The introduction of these inequities between personnel in intelligence work and other civil servants, does not appropriately seem to be of concern to the problem of career development, but applies more to the problem of correcting these inequities by law so that the jobs will be attractive enough to solve the problems of recruiting capable people.

8. We also object to the concept that the growth pattern of an employee in career development is necessarily characterized by mobility and movement. Mobility by and of itself is not a legitimate objective or technique unless related to a fundamental aim. If the aim is career development and mobility of movement seems to enhance the accomplishment of the main objective, it would then seem to be a legitimate activity. This would appear to apply almost exclusively to the career development of key Agency personnel.

9. Another serious conflict in conceptual thinking relates to the suggested five-year period of junior professional employee training and experience which, according to the survey, would permit the individual to try several career fields, thereby helping him to settle on his specialty. We feel that the process is not this simple. The junior

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professional employee entering the Agency must be qualified through professional training in a special field and has already committed himself to a profession through the considerable investment in time and money on his education. We also feel that the highly trained professional specialist, who is needed in the intelligence business, would not submit to a long delay in getting to work in his already-chosen professional field.

10. The survey casts the process of career development into three stages:

- a. The elementary, experimental, or learning stage;
- b. The selection of a specialty and the practice of it over a period of years; and
- c. For those who have what it takes, emergence into the third or advanced stage, with assignments of broad executive responsibility.

We submit that the economists, geographers, scientists, etc., who have worked with the Agency for a period of time are at least as much a part of the process of intelligence as any "collector, evaluator, or analyst" who has grown up entirely inside the Agency "developmental program".

Relating their situation to these three stages, it becomes clear that these professionals for the most part should be considered as being in the second stage, having previously selected and received training in their fields of special interest. They have, to be sure, skipped the elementary

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period of shopping around the Agency, a few months here and a few months there; however, the loss of this dubious luxury seems hardly vital or permanently crippling, given the associations that intelligence producers quickly develop with other Agency components in the course of their professional duties. A practical career development program or talent selection system aimed at developing and picking men from stage two for top leadership responsibilities surely cannot be limited to consideration only of Clandestine Services personnel (as seems to be implied) or, for that matter, of people whose employment experience -- either in DD/P, DD/I, or DD/S -- has been limited to CIA. A wise and effective career program will concern itself with the selection and development of those with outstanding career potential from among officers in stage two, no matter what their present field of specialized assignment.

11. The problem of career development is the major concern of the report; however, it is complicated by the introduction of the concept of career staffs and the placement of people in them. We feel that a concentration on career development without regard to the organization and functioning of Career Service staffs would essentially deal with the main concern of the Agency.

12. Without further development and criticism of the many conceptual irregularities in the survey report, we would like to move on to

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recommendations which have been generated by our review. In the first place, we recognize the need for formulation of specific policy on career development. This, we feel, could be accomplished by a Career Development Board appointed by the DCI and with representative members from the Office of Personnel, Office of Training, the DD/I, the DD/F and the DD/S. The Board's action would be limited to policy formulation and the implementation made the responsibility of existing organizational units in the Agency. The Director of Personnel should be the Chairman of the Board.

13. The Office of Personnel should be named the central action unit with assigned responsibility for coordinating implementation of career development policies handed down by the Board. In that Office, a Career Development Division should be established to provide the support required. The key positions (probably the super-grade positions) in the Agency which require that the incumbents, in addition to outstanding innate ability, have knowledge and experience in many facets of Agency operations should be identified. The training program should then be organized to prepare selected people to fill these positions. Each operational unit in the Agency should be required to consider their employees periodically and to identify and recommend to the Career Development Division, Office of Personnel, those who have been outstanding in their performance, but more importantly have potential for filling key positions at some future period

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in his career with the Agency. The Career Development Division should select out of the recommended group those employees for specialized career development who meet critical standards related to key position performance. Personnel selected for this training should then be managed and directed for a prescribed period of time through an educational and job experience program. After completion of this period of developmental training, these personnel should be assigned to jobs leading toward eventual assignment in key positions. Careers should be continuously monitored and periodic assessments made of their performance. If individuals at any time do not measure up to standards, they should be dropped from the program. This individual career development program should involve no more than 200 to 300 personnel at any one time.

14. All other personnel in the Agency who are not selected for the above should be involved in a program of individual career development leading toward maximum growth of their capabilities in one or several of the many jobs to be done in organizational units throughout the Agency.

15. The Career Development Division in the Office of Personnel would have the further responsibility of developing with the Office of Training both general courses and specifically tailored training to meet program objectives.

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16. This program for meeting Agency needs through career development does not provide for the creation of a career staff, but addresses itself to the development of an executive reserve. It emphasizes a logical way of providing for the development of exceptional talent to fill key positions, as well as providing for the development of highly competent personnel to fill all other positions in organizational units.

17. It should be pointed out that the all-too-common practice of filling senior jobs by supervisors acting on the basis of personal knowledge concerning available candidates will reduce the effectiveness of any objectively organized career development program.

**OTTO E. GUTHE
Assistant Director
Research and Reports**