

N6.15

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

In August 1946, the Office of Research and Evaluations occupied most of the offices in the Central Building, having recently moved from a small suite in the New War (now State) Building. Since February 15 it had been producing the Daily and since June 7 the Weekly Summaries of current intelligence. In addition, it had produced three formal estimates: ORE-1 "Soviet Foreign and Military Policy"; ORE-2 "Analysis of Soviet Foreign Propaganda Broadcasts"; ORE 2/1 "Analysis of Soviet-Controlled German Broadcasts".

Much of the organization of the Office of Research and Evaluation at this time was on paper. A map had been drawn up which divided the world into six areas of responsibility for six geographical "Branches." These were: (1) The Latin American Branch, which included everything in the Western Hemisphere south of the Rio Grande; (2) The Northern Branch which was responsible for Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, and the British Empire; (3) The Eastern-European-USSR Branch which was the authority on Soviet Russia and its European Satellites and sole oracle on the subject of Soviet intentions anywhere; (4) The Western European Branch with responsibility for France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Benelux, Austria, Germany, and the possessions of Western European powers in North Africa and elsewhere; (5) The Near East/Africa Branch concerned with Greece, all the Near Eastern countries including Afghanistan and the Indian sub-continent (but not Burma or Tibet which belonged to the Far East), and all of Africa except what belonged to Western Europe or had to be accepted in part ownership with the

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Northern Branch; and (6) the Far East/Pacific Branch, which had China, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia including Burma and the Philippines, and the islands of the Pacific excluding American possessions and those in which other Branches had a primary interest.

In actual practice, through 1946, this Branch organization was less formidable than it would appear. No Branch probably had more than a dozen employees. The Northern Branch did not exist until 1947 and its functions were covered as part of the work of Western Europe. There being no actual Near East/Africa Branch, the traffic concerning the area was handled pro tem by the assistant editor for the Daily and Weekly Summaries.

The Functional Branches existed on paper only. They were eventually established as an Economics Branch, an International Organizations Branch and a Transportation Branch. There was also set up a "Military Affairs Group" which consisted of a Navy captain, and Colonels from Army and Marine Corps which was supposed to furnish expert military advice, as well as liaison with the Pentagon, for the Office of Research and Evaluation. This effort was such a complete failure, however, that it was ultimately abandoned.

Heading the Office of Reports and Evaluations at the time were Mr. L. L. Montague as Acting Assistant Director and [redacted] STAT [redacted] his Deputy. Mr. [redacted] was a combination of Executive Officer, STAT Administrative Officer and Personnel Officer. The Daily and Weekly Summaries were edited by Messrs. [redacted] STAT

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Operations of the Office at this time were rudimentary. Mr. Montague was concerned mainly with administrative detail, particularly selection of personnel and relations with the Director and with the Agencies. Supervision of actual intelligence production was largely left to

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Almost the whole productive effort of the Office was concentrated on the Summaries. In the morning, one of the members of the editorial staff would stop by the Old State-War-Navy Building, go to the office of the editor of the State Daily Summary and be handed a manila envelope containing State's traffic for the day. With the exception of Top Secret items, no receipts were made out for any of this; the "messenger" did not even know what he had until he reached his office and opened the envelope. Between about nine and ten, the assistant editor would go over the State traffic thus acquired, would study it, pencil a note on those telegrams he thought might be used in the Summary, and sort out the cables according to geographic branches. Meanwhile, a messenger would bring in the traffic from the War and Navy departments which would be handled the same way. When the job was finished, the editor would telephone the various Branches which would send for their share. At about eleven, proposed Daily items, submitted by the Branches, would begin to arrive in the editors' office where they would be edited according to the style of the Daily. At noon or thereabouts, Branch Chiefs, editors, and [redacted] or Mr. Montague would gather in Mr. [redacted] office to make decisions as to what should be printed and in what form.

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Because the Summaries were the only outlet for material produced by the Office, each Branch was anxious to furnish as many items as possible, and [] often had to exercise considerable tact in order to get out a respectable publication without leaving an office full of disgruntled authors. As is usually the case under such circumstances, individuals were frequently outraged when their prose was editorially altered. Final decisions, when editors and authors could not agree, were put up to Mr. Montague whose authority [] used sparingly but to good purpose.

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As items were agreed upon, they were typed on stencils, proof-read sheet by sheet, and run off on the machine. Individual Daily Summaries seldom ran to more than four pages---never to more than six---because anything over three pages was likely to bring complaints from Admirals' and Generals' sides. By one o'clock, the Daily was usually dittoed, assembled, enclosed in blue folders, packaged, receipted for, and on its way by courier to its approximately fifteen official recipients. There were times when publication was delayed beyond this point and it was not particularly uncommon for the editors (who usually helped the two or three typists down to the last mechanical operation in producing the paper) to have to delay lunch until mid-afternoon.

Although there was an agreement that Weekly articles should be furnished early in the week, many of them usually reached the editors on Thursday, which meant in practice that much of the actual editing had to be done into the late hours of Thursday night. Friday morning

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was naturally bedlam because both the Daily and the Weekly had to be published and out of the building before 2 P.M. The Weekly involved much the same editorial and mechanical processes as the Daily only on a larger scale. The Weekly was sent out in a loose-leaf binder, for which purpose one of the editors had to carry the dittoed pages by hand to the print shop where the binding was done.

On Friday afternoon, after the publications were out of the way and people had had lunch, a meeting was held with Mr. Montague or Mr. [redacted] the editors, and the Branch Chiefs, ostensibly for the purpose of deciding approximately what would be the content of the next Weekly. Actually the meeting seldom came to any important conclusions regarding the Weekly but it gave an opportunity for a discussion of office matters in general. No records of these meetings were kept. If they had been, they would probably serve to give a valuable insight into the early development of the Office of Research and Evaluation. This meeting was, of course, the earliest form of the Estimates Production Board. (See No. 1, pp. 31-38)

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On January 21, 1947 a new activity was added to the office when General Vandenberg decided that he should have a weekly oral briefing. For the first presentation or two, these meetings, which were held in the Central Building presentation room, were highly exclusive, no one from the Office of Research and Evaluations being allowed to attend except the Assistant Director, the Branch Chiefs, and the editor. After this, however, the Director decided that, rather than a private briefing for him, these affairs should serve as general education for all.

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Hence they became open to practically everyone in Central Intelligence plus representatives from the other intelligence agencies. As they became a routine part of operations, they became themselves routine and dull. Various methods were adopted with a view to overcoming this fault---planted questions, panel presentation and so forth---but it was soon clear that they were of little value and required more time and effort than they were worth. (It became customary to estimate, from the character of the attendance, which elements of the Agency were the most idle. Attendance by members of the Interdepartmental Coordinating and Planning Staff was exceptionally faithful.)

The Office of Reports and Estimates moved from the Central to the "M" Building late in 1946 or early in 1947. At this time, the building was in the possession of the national Office of Education with which Central Intelligence shared the space for some time. Security was preserved through guards placed at the entrances to the part of the building occupied by the Group. Eventually, the expansion of the Office of Reports and Estimates and of the Office of Collection and Dissemination was such that they required all of the "M" Building plus most of "Q" after the Office of Special Operations had moved out of the latter.

Gradually while the size of the Office increased the business of Reports and Estimates became more systematized and more highly organized. Whether more and better work was done than in the brief Central Building period of few employees and practically no organization would be another question.