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10 July 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Inspector General

THROUGH: Deputy Director/Intelligence

Concur. IG statement par 1
is superficial and should
be withdrawn. RBJr.

SUBJECT: IG Staff Report on Visit to OBI

REFERENCE: Memo from Executive Assistant to DD/I
to AD/BI, subject: Unannounced Spot
Checks on Agency Components by
IG Staff, dated 9 July 1957

1. Reference memorandum contains the following quotation from an IG staff report on a recent visit to this Office:

"One factor which should be reviewed is OBI's subsidy of the Board on Geographic Names. This is a component of the Interior Department for which Congress has refused to provide funds. It consists of 85 people and costs the Agency [] annually. It produces gazetteers for which there is acknowledged need. However, the hazard of supporting with Agency funds a unit which Congress deems unworthy of support should be reconsidered."

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2. I am concerned about the implications of the last sentence of this quoted report. The subject was not discussed during the visit of the IG staff member, nor has this Office ever considered the budgetary support of BGN in this light. It is a matter of record that Congress has not seen fit in recent years to appropriate funds directly to the Department of the Interior for this work. This is not to infer, however, that Congress deems the BGN, nor its supporting staff in the Office of Geography, unworthy of support.

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3. The enabling act of the present BGN stems from Public Law 242 of the 80th Congress, approved 25 July 1947. The following quotation from the Senate report on the bill (S. 1262) which led to the Act seems to reflect the intent of the Congress in this respect:

"In recent years the desirability of obtaining permanent legislative authorization for the geographic-names work has been suggested by the Appropriations Committee of both House and Senate, and the enactment of S. 1262 would provide the requisite statutory basis for the continuance of a program which the Congress has considered worthy of support for more than 25 years, and would eliminate the possibility of a point of order being made and sustained against a future appropriation item for this activity."

4. The Bureau of the Budget and the pertinent Appropriations Subcommittees of the Congress are fully aware that CIA's budget has been carrying the major support for the Office of Geography, Department of the Interior, since the inception of the NIS Program. The Director, Office of Geography, has repeatedly sought budgetary support from the Department, but this has been denied by the Secretary of the Interior, so that Interior's budget goes to the Congress without request for these funds.

5. The CIA's position is clear and legal. We needed worldwide geographic name standardization in support of the NIS Program. BGN is designated by the Congress "to provide a central authority for standardizing geographic names for the purpose of eliminating duplication in standardizing such names among the Federal departments, and for other purposes." Therefore, OBI utilized BGN for this purpose and assumed, as a service of common concern, the financial support of geographic-names standardization in the form of NIS Gazetteers. This has become a valuable intelligence service that will need to be continued through CIA budget support, if it is to be done at all, until the Department of the Interior obtains direct Congressional appropriations for this work.

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[Redacted Signature Box]

Assistant Director
Basic Intelligence

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