

ADMINISTRATIVE ONLY

OTR 1642

26 March 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training

SUBJECT : Interim Report on Presidential Classroom

1. Introduction: Four of the six scheduled runnings of the Presidential Classroom have been held so far. This is an interim report on attitudes, questions, and feedback involving the 1400 high school students from all over the country who have participated in the program up to now.

2. Attitudes: The students' attitudes are shaped in part by their youthful idealism and their lack of historical consciousness, but they are also very much influenced by the Vietnam and Watergate backlashes.

a. There are strong currents of isolationism and pacifism and there is little perception of any threat from the USSR. The need for intelligence is less obvious than it was during the great confrontations of the Cold War. The Cold War itself is viewed from the perspective of the present, somewhat like an aberration of the older generation.

b. The prestige of the Presidency and the Executive Branch is low. CIA accountability to the President and the NSC does not quiet concerns any more. For some, it is what they fear. By accountability, they mean Congressional accountability. Some go further and insist on public accountability. In this connection, the tide is running very strong against any secrecy in government and we are the model of a secret governmental organization. CIA's secret budget has become a symbol of this resentment.

c. There is a great moralism evidenced, particularly in regard to "CIA intervention in the internal affairs of other countries" (██████ is the model) and to allegations of CIA assassinations.

d. The attitude toward the press is completely uncritical. Journalists are considered the heroes who uncovered the abuses of Watergate.

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e. The "right to privacy" and the repugnance against files is running very strong. Everyone wants to know about CIA "spying" on American citizens and accumulating "files" on them.

f. Conspiracy theories are beginning to bloom, particularly those revolving around the assassination of President Kennedy. There is a great revival of interest in this tragedy manifested by the students and a great reluctance to accept the findings of the Warren Commission. Generally the conspiracy questions are asked in a probing sort of way rather than hurled as accusations.

g. On the positive side, there is still an inherent interest in the work of intelligence and, at times, some express sympathy for CIA in reaction to the assaults of the press. One regional variable has been noted: students from the South are more apt to be receptive to CIA than those from other regions.

3. Questions:

a. Most of the questions are the usual substantive, operational, or administrative questions. For example: What will happen to South Vietnam?...What happens when a CIA agent is caught?...What are the requirements for becoming an intelligence officer?

b. Some of the more persistent and/or sensitive questions follow. They are not new this year, but are asked more frequently.

(1) Political Action Questions: Does CIA overthrow governments?...Did it overthrow Chile?... Didn't CIA supply arms for killing Allende?

(2) Assassination Questions: Does CIA assassinate people?...Would you comment on the rumor that CIA assassinated President Kennedy?

(3) Accountability Questions: Does CIA take action on its own?...Who is CIA accountable to?... Why is the CIA budget secret?

c. Last year's persistent question is not frequently asked any more: What was CIA's involvement in Watergate?

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d. The new questions that have come up this year are as follows:

(1) Domestic Spying Questions: What types of domestic activities are prohibited in your charter?...It has recently been brought out that CIA trained over twelve US police departments in the use of explosives. How does this deal with intelligence?...To what extent does CIA keep files on American citizens?...Please comment on the charges that CIA has been opening the mail of US citizens?...With the current allegations that private citizens are being bugged, what checks are there to assure that the privacy of US citizens will not be disturbed?

(2) Questions Dealing with Morality: Does CIA exercise any moral judgment?...Is there any code of ethics on how far you can go or can you just do whatever you want?...What moral right do we have to mess around with other governments?

(3) Variations on the Domestic Assassination Theme: Did CIA make a deal with Nixon to help him win the 1960 elections so it could have a free hand in dealing with Castro, so that when he lost, it then plotted Kennedy's assassination?...Was Oswald a CIA agent?

(4) Miscellaneous Questions: There have been many rumors that CIA was involved in the Kent State affair, that you hired students to start the riots in the sixties. Did you have anything to do with it?...I'm from Puerto Rico. We were told that in 1940 CIA changed our economic system from an agricultural to an industrial one so that we could never be independent as we do not have the proper economic basis. Please comment.

4. Feedback: Each Presidential Classroom attends 17 seminars during their week in Washington. At the end of the week, they rate each one. We have received the ratings for the first two programs.

a. The first week, CIA was rated 7th of 17, outranked by Jack Anderson on the News Media, Vic Gold on the Presidency, Senator Humphrey on the Senate, General Brown on the Military, Justice Tom Clark on the Judiciary, and the Department of State on Foreign Policy.

b. The second week, CIA was rated 1st of 17.

Two factors may have influenced the difference in ratings between the two weeks. In the first week, the film "Need to Know" did not have a positive impact. For the second session, it was dropped and the 20 minute briefing was expanded to 50 minutes. The longer period allowed more time to establish rapport and credibility. The second factor involves the seminar on the News Media which is presented on the day following the CIA program. In the first week, it was handled by Jack Anderson who undercut us with several anti-CIA remarks. In the second week, James Kilpatrick handled that News Media seminar and said some good things about CIA, thus reinforcing what we sought to convey.

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OTR Briefing Officer

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

DDA 75-1503

SUBJECT: (Optional)
Interim Report on Presidential Classroom

FROM:	DTR 1026 C of C	EXTENSION	NO.
		3245	DTR 1642
		DATE	

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)	DATE		OFFICER'S INITIALS	COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)
	RECEIVED	FORWARDED		

1.	DDA 7D-18	28 MAR 1975	28 MAR 1975	JLK	As you requested, there is attached [redacted] STATINTL report on the types of questions and attitudes toward the Agency displayed by students in the Presidential Classroom. Jack: 26 Mar 75 I think these questions are most revealing and worthy of the Director's attention. Rod 103 I believe this is worth your time to screen. These kids will elect the Congress of tomorrow [redacted]
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5.	[redacted]	4/2/75		
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8.	Fascinating share with [redacted]			
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