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31 August 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Comments concerning the Report of the Task Force on Personnel Management in CIA

REFERENCE : Memo to Executive Committee fr Executive Director
subj: Report of the Task Force on Personnel Management in CIA

This memorandum contains my tentative opinions regarding each of the twenty-five principal recommendations made by the Task Force in reference report. I must necessarily qualify my opinions as being tentative for any of several reasons. Some of the recommendations made are very fundamental and important and warrant the most thoughtful study before receiving serious consideration. I do not believe the Task Force undertook to make such studies and most of its recommendations, therefore, would better be viewed as identifications of possible weaknesses in our present personnel policies and concepts of personnel management rather than as specific proposals for policy approval and action. Other recommendations seem to be based upon at least partially incorrect understandings of current personnel policies and practices of the Agency. Lastly, there is a great possibility that I may not be fully understanding of some of the recommendations in the context that was understood by the Task Force.

Recommendation No. 1: Concur. As you know, this is being done.

Recommendation No. 2: Concur. Study has been completed and submitted to the DDCI.

Recommendation No. 3: The Agency's Career Service Program, together with its subordinate career service mechanisms representing major areas of vocational specialization, was evolved over many years as one possible solution to the seemingly hopeless problem of developing a unified Agency personnel program. The problem lay in the highly divisive forces generated by widely divergent missions, world-wide dispersion of command authorities, high security compartmentation, and conflicting philosophies of organization and command. The fact is, however, that a workable concept and mechanism has been evolved. Whereas I strongly endorse any proposal to continue our studies and further evolve and strengthen our personnel management system, I do not agree and indeed think it would be most detrimental were the Agency to "abolish" the entire Career Service system. I also must disagree that the present system "has served to dissipate the command responsibilities of the line executives." Examination of our numerous career services discloses that they basically conform to the organizational structure of the Agency and are operated under command of the related Deputy Director concerned or, where appropriate, office heads subordinate to him.

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Recommendation No. 4: Here I think that the real recommendation is contained in paragraph 5 rather than in Recommendation No. 4 as stated. I concur in the principle, but this needs to be studied in greater depth. The supervisor who makes out the individual's fitness report is, in many instances, unable to advise the individual of exactly where he stands in competition with his contemporaries. To be effective, I think that this probably will have to be done at some higher level - as we are now organized by some higher echelon in the Career Service.

Recommendation No. 5: I have serious reservations as to the wisdom of issuing such a notice. I believe that there are other ways to accomplish the same objective and that this alone would not do much to boost morale; in fact, unless it were followed by tangible evidence of some kind it could do harm. I am particularly doubtful as to the wisdom of the apparent proposal contained in paragraph 4 of the suggested notice. I believe that a special exercise requiring a conference between each employee and his supervisor would tend to alarm the employee body at large rather than reassure it. Secondly, as indicated in my comments on Recommendation No. 4, I do not believe the first-line supervisor is in a position to counsel the employee to the degree implied in the draft notice with respect to his "precise status" and "future prospects."

Recommendations 6, 7 and 8 all pertain to the Agency system of fitness reports. In this connection I wish to point out that the Agency has only in the past few months put into use a new, and we believe significantly improved, form of fitness report. My basic position is that we should concentrate all of our efforts toward ensuring that the requirements and rating standards of the new form are clearly understood and followed by all supervisors. A close system of monitoring, not only by the Office of Personnel but by all levels of line supervision, will be required. My specific counter-recommendation is that the Director of Personnel immediately develop a joint monitoring and correction system in collaboration with each of the Directorates and that the latter exercise strong leadership in requiring greater perception and depth in performance rating process and in bringing about greater uniformity in the use of rating standards. Subject to these general statements, my specific comments on recommendations 6, 7 and 8 follow.

Recommendation No. 6: This is an objective well worth striving for; however, I am not optimistic that any system can be devised which will eliminate the human aspects of making out fitness reports. We want every supervisor and reviewing official to be completely honest in his evaluation of an individual. I am not sure that this is consistent with the establishment of an administrative requirement that a certain percentage of all employees must be rated in the lower, middle, or upper category. There are just too many human judgments involved to allow the actual distribution to coincide with the theoretical.

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Recommendation No. 7: While I have no objection to changing the current fitness report form, the ink is hardly dry on our latest effort in this regard. This form requires supervisors to be rated on this aspect of their performance. This is not to say that this or any other form cannot be improved upon, but I do not think that the form is really the key to the problem. What you have to do is try to get people to be honest and completely objective in making out fitness reports on any form and through any system. I doubt very seriously that a new form will in and of itself accomplish the desired result.

Recommendation No. 8: Here again I concur in the objective, but I submit that the supervisor (rating officer), in most cases, is not in a position to advise an employee of his relative standing.

Recommendation No. 9: I believe that the thrust of this recommendation is stated in paragraph 10 rather than in Recommendation No. 9. I concur in Recommendation No. 9 in principle; however, there is a great deal of work to be done before it can be effectively implemented, and I would like to see a system devised and approved by the DECI before attempting implementation.

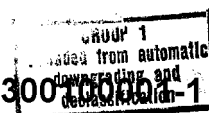
Recommendation No. 10: I would want to see a much deeper study on this particular recommendation before concurring. My immediate reaction is that this should not and probably could not apply across the board. I think that there probably are many positions upon which there is a definite ceiling and in which employees very definitely can continue to do a superior job indefinitely without promotion.

Recommendation No. 11: The Director of Personnel is not in a position to establish larger separation allowances. Assuming that our present regulation on separation compensation is a sound precedent, it requires clearances with the Bureau of the Budget, Civil Service Commission, President's Personnel Advisor, Attorney General, Comptroller General, and four Congressional Committees. If we are successful in implementing Recommendation No. 1, this will be pretty well taken care of.

Recommendation No. 12: I concur in the recommendation. However, I am firmly convinced that in the final analysis, no matter what the Agency does, a surplus employee will or will not get a job elsewhere depending to a very high degree on his personal qualifications and the impression which he is able to make upon a prospective employer. Every prospective employer is going to search for the answer to his question, "Why did CIA let this man go?". Assuming that we can provide a good answer to this question, ninety per cent of the problem still rests with the individual and his ability to convince a prospective employer that he has something that the employer needs.

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Recommendation No. 13: It seems to me that the primary recommendation here is contained in paragraph 14 rather than in the specific recommendation, and I believe that this is a problem which needs much deeper study. I have serious reservations about the effect on the morale of employees other than JOT's if each JOT is earmarked as belonging to that elite group from which are to be chosen people to fill the Agency's key jobs. I think, also, that the JOT's might well be disillusioned at a later date.

Recommendation No. 14: I think you recognize in paragraph 15 that all supergrades are not really generalists; and, therefore, I would like to see this problem studied much more thoroughly.

Recommendation No. 15: Non-concur. I am gratified to see that the theme running through this paper would strengthen the hand of the Director of Personnel. However, in the handling of supergrades, I believe that the Deputy Directors should personally play a strong role; and I, for one, would not be willing to be by-passed by the Director of Personnel and have these responsibilities taken over by a board. We just eliminated the Supergrade Review Board. This would merely reestablish it under another name.

Recommendation No. 16: First we have to settle the question of whether we want to set up this new category of "Generalist". If so, then the Director of Personnel should devise a system of identifying these people.

Recommendation No. 17: I think that the principle of a mid-career course is fine, regardless of who finally attends it. However, I don't see how it would help in identifying the middle echelon supervisors who should be named generalists, and I caution against approval of this recommendation without full understanding of what it means and what it is going to take to make it work. We can set up a course in the Office of Training with little difficulty. A course is no good unless somebody attends it. To make it work, it may require some increased facilities and staff in OTR. More important, however, is the fact that Agency components will have to send people to the course. In short, there are budgetary and personnel ceiling implications here; and, unless we are prepared to provide this kind of support, approval of the recommendation will mean little or nothing.

Recommendation No. 18: I have no objection to the study, but at the moment I question the advisability of periodic issuances to announce promotions.

Recommendation No. 19: This recommendation needs more study. In order to carry out the responsibilities proposed for the Director of Personnel, he will have to have support from the DDCI. Before the Director of Personnel is given this responsibility, a procedure for carrying it out should be devised and approved by the DDCI.

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Recommendation No. 20: While I am in favor of a Personnel Development Board, I am not sure about establishment of the "generalists" category; and, here again, before we establish a board we should make up our minds what it is going to do. Following the Inspector General's inspection of our Career Service in 1960 a Personnel Development Board was established and, as far as I am concerned, it has produced practically nothing.

Recommendation No. 21: I am strongly in favor of a program which insures junior officer, mid-career, and senior officer training at certain stages of their careers. However, as I have already said, there is no point in the Agency's endorsement of this as a principle unless it is prepared to support the program with money and personnel ceilings which will make it possible to carry it out. In connection with the specific recommendation, we will soon complete a paper on this subject, which was requested by the Executive Director a few weeks ago.

Recommendation No. 22: Concur in principle. However, I am not sure just what is meant by "We feel that top caliber personnel technicians must be obtained."

Recommendation No. 23: I concur in this recommendation and believe that the Agency could and should become more homogeneous. At the same time, however, I think that we must not lose sight of the fact that various parts of the Agency do have different problems. The carrying out of our mission requires extreme flexibility, and let us not become over-standardized. Here again, therefore, I believe that it would be appropriate to make a study and decide what we are going to standardize and have it approved by the DDCI before the Director of Personnel attempts to carry out this recommendation.

Recommendation No. 24: Concur.

Recommendation No. 25: Does paragraph 25 mean that the DD/P has done a better job of personnel management than other Agency components? The details of any plan to provide more centralized control in personnel matters need to be studied before a final position can be taken on this recommendation. At the moment I still believe that the Area Division needs a Personnel Officer.

15/
L. K. White
Deputy Director
(Support)

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