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Executive Registry

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Intelligence
Headquarters, United States Air Force

SUBJECT: Project Treasure Island (Exploitation of Open
Source Slavic Publications)

1. Reference your memorandum, same subject, dated 20 September, the Treasure Island project has been reviewed as requested.

2. Although your three questions are concise and logically addressed to this Agency, the proposed plan of operation, as contained in your enclosure, is not sufficiently specific to permit either brief or categorical replies to your queries. The comments attached as Tab A point out certain inconsistencies in the project, and some of the problems which would arise if the plan were implemented in its present form.

3. The following provisional answers are submitted for your consideration, subject to the qualifications of paragraph 2, above.

a) "Will the Air Force be duplicating similar projects being conducted by other agencies?"

If the scope of the project is as extensive as paragraph 4f, page 10 of the brief would indicate, the answer is in the affirmative. If the definition of the pertinent information to be extracted is limited, as stated in paragraph 4e of the brief, to "the fields of economic and industrial information related to strategic vulnerability, technical air information and air arm and civil air information, biographical air information and air geography," the answer is still in the affirmative since Foreign Documents Branch, CIA, is presently extracting from current Russian newspapers and periodicals information which falls into these categories.

If it were presumed that the Treasure Island Project would, on the other hand, make use of Foreign Documents Branch Press Extracts and the Joint Press Reading Service Press Summary as exploitation of the Soviet press, although not under Air Intelligence control, then duplication would still exist in the proposal (paragraph 5) that the Army Library handle current periodicals and that the Library of Congress handle "government periodicals." Inasmuch as all Soviet periodicals are government periodicals, the distinction is somewhat illogical. Nevertheless, since Foreign Documents Branch is at present abstracting all periodicals that it is possible to get, duplication would necessarily result.

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Although the extent of air geography is not clearly defined, it is believed that in the exploitation of basic information on this subject there would be some duplication with the work done by the Army Map Service.

It is possible that processing of the backlog might duplicate some of the work done by the Inter-departmental Committee for the Acquisition of Foreign Publications and the Foreign Economic Administration during the war, and that which was done by the Office of International Trade, Department of Commerce, and the Intelligence Division, WDGS, especially as contained in the latter's war-time publication entitled "Information from the European Press." German material, already processed by CIA, also contains the results of exploitation of pre-war ~~European~~ publications and captured documents for industrial and economic information.

Finally, it is assumed that the proposed project would be coordinated with Project 307-X of the Aeronautical Chart Service and with the extensive abstracting of foreign air technical publications as carried on by T-2, AMC (Wright Field), to avoid duplication within the Department of the Air Force.

b) "Will the Air Force be operating in its field of dominant interest?"

In answer to this, it must be stated that the exploitation of open source material involving the selection and extraction of such basic information as exists in foreign publications cannot, with certain technical exceptions, be said to lie within any one field of dominant interest. A published item on the construction of new steel factory in the USSR is of interest to CIA and other intelligence agencies as well as to the Air Force. Dominant or departmental interest lies in the interpretation, analysis and use of the raw information. Accordingly, it can only be stated that by its very nature, this type of operation must be of concern to all the IAC agencies.

c) The final question asks: "Will such a project lead to unhealthy competition for translators?" This is modified by a statement in paragraph 3 that only low order, non-technical translators are envisioned.

In connection with the latter, a question arises as to how technical air information (paragraph 1c of the brief) will be extracted by non-technical translators. It is believed that experience will show that the employment of really low order translators is inefficient, time-consuming and costly. This has been recognized in the preparation of the tentative P/O (Annex I) which calls for 22 P-4's, 14 P-3's, etc. Translators of such grades are considered by CIA and the Civil Service Commission to be of extremely high caliber. Thus, the administration of the proposed project would be recruiting the best-trained linguists it could find, which then put

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in the field another competitor for experienced and qualified linguists and translators. Experience has shown that for every low grade translator (i.e., CAF-5), one qualified and experienced translator is needed to check and correct the work, and in the end less time would be spent if medium grade translators were hired.

The answer is therefore mainly affirmative, in that "competition for translators" would result. Whether or not this competition would be "unhealthy" would depend on whether a coordinated recruitment plan could be worked out with other agencies.

It is believed that the competition for translators might be less serious than the competition for sources and source materials, in view of the difficulty of obtaining even one copy of many current USSR publications in Moscow.

4. The opportunity to comment on the proposed project is appreciated by this Agency, and if you should desire further discussion or clarification of any of the points mentioned above, a conference between the appropriate branch chiefs of the CIA and the Directorate of Intelligence can be arranged at your convenience.

E. K. WRIGHT
BRIGADIER GENERAL, USA
~~DEPUTY~~ DIRECTOR

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