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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Division of Biographic InformationHistory

Organized biographic intelligence is a relative newcomer in the general field of government in the United States. Though many foreign countries have long possessed highly developed and specialized biographic organizations it was not until after World War II that an organized biographic program, to replace previous uncoordinated and haphazard methods, was conceived and established within the United States intelligence community.

Because of the lack of adequate personality information to meet the needs of the government during the war, several agencies (Office of Strategic Services [OSS]; Office of War Information [OWI]; Military Intelligence Division [MID], War Department; Office of Naval Intelligence [ONI], Navy Department; and State) developed their own biographic programs, most of which were conceived in haste and were highly duplicative. Many of these programs were discontinued at the war's end as their parent agencies were abolished and, in 1946, the establishment of the Central Intelligence Group (CIG), predecessor organization of CIA, led to examination and finally to definition of the biographic collecting and reporting responsibilities of the Intelligence Advisory Committee (IAC) agencies. There have been certain revisions to the original definition, the most significant concerning scientific personalities, responsibility for which was vested in CIA under the terms of NSCID #8 (1948). This is the only NSCID which specifically delegates authority in the biographic field to any one agency but by

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implication NSCID's #2 and #3 vest biographic responsibility in the various agencies of the IAC according to their areas of dominant interest, as follows:

Political, sociological, cultural	State
Military	Army
Naval	Navy
Air	Air Force
Scientific (NSCID #8)	CIA
Economic	All departments according to need

The Mission of the Division of Biographic Information (BI)

BI's mission is to meet the known and anticipated needs of the Department, the Foreign Service, and the Central Intelligence Agency with respect to biographic information and intelligence concerning foreign nationals of present or potential significance in political, economic, sociological and cultural fields.

The fulfillment of its mission involves two basic functions. BI must first, create, by a continuous process of procurement and organization, a central collection of the most complete information possible on all foreigners of current or potential significance in the fields of politics, culture, and sociology, and to the extent of Departmental needs, on such persons in economic fields, and second, produce and disseminate biographic intelligence as may be required by:

- a) the Department of State and the Foreign Service
- b) Central Intelligence Agency
- c) other agencies of the U.S. Government

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In order to carry out both functions, BI's collection of information must be world wide in geographic scope and must include all information of every kind and character on persons of current or potential significance in the fields of endeavor which fall within BI's responsibilities as described above.

While the performance of BI's collection and filing function is important and significant, the use of the collection as a basis of intelligence production makes the process far more than a routine library operation. This in itself brings into play the various stages of research. The entire collection and filing program must also be directed toward the intelligence objectives of BI; the selection of material, its organization and its filing must be performed by personnel fully trained to produce and disseminate biographic intelligence.

Accomplishment of the Mission

As stated at the outset BI has two functions to perform in carrying out its mission. These two, the collection and filing function and the production function, are closely inter-related, and their successful implementation requires that they be performed by the same staff. As a result the Division is organized on the basis of eight regional Branches with each Branch responsible for several different countries. The files are organized by country and are controlled alphabetically by name and by pertinent subject breakdowns. Thus, for example, within the Western Europe Branch of BI

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lies responsibility for France, Spain, Portugal, Benelux Countries, and their colonies, with five professionals and two clerks charged with all aspects of biographic activity pertaining to these areas. In analyzing the factors which comprise BI's two functions and their relationship, BI has found it easy to marshall arguments in favor of giving primary attention to the collection and filing function and relegating the production function to a secondary position in the Division's plans.

While production is clearly dependent upon a collection of information, there exists no ready-made library of information to serve a biographic intelligence agency. Published collections of biographies are useful, but they quickly become out-of-date, and they contain only public information. Hence a continuous, extensive and intensive collection program is a prerequisite of biographic intelligence, and must take precedence over the production function. The collection function involves the location of sources, collection of sources and of information, selection of information to be filed, processing and filing of selected information, and serving as a reference library of biographic information. In this connection the Division is constantly implementing its Foreign Service Biographic Program, the basic regulations for which are outlined in the Foreign Service Manual, Volume IV, Chapter 500. Under the terms of these regulations each Foreign Service post is charged with responsibility for establishing biographic files and for actively engaging in the biographic reporting program. To stimulate the efforts of the Foreign Service along these lines, a senior

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member of the staff of BI (when funds permit) makes periodic trips to missions requiring guidance and in addition all staff members are encouraged to communicate, by means of official instruction or by informal correspondence, with the missions in their areas of responsibility. Further, systematic procedures have been developed for briefing outgoing Foreign Service Officers on the biographic needs of the Department and the intelligence community as a whole, and for debriefing officers when they return from their foreign assignments. This has proved to be a most lucrative source of information.

Nonetheless, and regardless of the importance of the collection function, the fact cannot be escaped that by virtue of the responsibilities with which it is charged BI is an intelligence unit and a program of complete emphasis on the collection function to the virtual exclusion of the dissemination activity falls far short of an intelligence program in the full sense of the word.

Since one of BI's two basic functions is that of producing and disseminating biographic intelligence, it cannot fulfill its mission without a comprehensive production program. It is not wholesome for an intelligence division to become an informational Dead Sea into which only a meager trickle of intelligence flows. Much of the elaborate and costly mechanism which collects biographic information from all corners of the world and organizes it into useful form in BI will be wasted if a program is not developed to disseminate the resulting intelligence to officials who can use it.

The Division's two functions, then must each be accorded its proper emphasis if a balance is to be maintained between them. To

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insure that such a balance is maintained the Division Office of BI, through constant surveillance of branch operations, keeps rigid control of collection efforts, processing activities, backlog accumulation, requests received and answered, and production.

The BI Product

BI's production function is preparation and dissemination of analytical, evaluative, and interpretive biographic intelligence reports and studies. The product takes various forms:

Biographic Reports - BR's (detailed biographic reports usually prepared on own initiative concerning an individual or group of individuals who are of general interest to officials of the IAC agencies because of their connection with a significant national or international development).

Biographic Briefs - BB's (brief biographic sketches -- usually not exceeding one page -- prepared at own initiative to meet a current intelligence need within the IAC concerning a significant national or international development).

Biographic Directories - BD's (biographic directories of foreign government and party organizations, of primary use at the working level).

Departmental Instructions (instructions to a mission or group of missions concerning a person or persons whose activities are of interest to the mission or missions addressed).

Informal biographic reports (biographic reports prepared in answer to specific requests but not deemed of sufficient general

interest to warrant wide distribution).

Conference reports (a series of biographic reports on delegates to international conferences).

NIS - Key Personalities (detailed biographies of the leadership of a given country in all fields of endeavor -- combined effort of the three military services, CIA, and State with BI having responsibility for substantive review of all contributions).

NIS - Sections 59 (detailed biographies of the political, economic, sociological and cultural leaders of a given country).

Informal memoranda (biographic notes of interest to a specific requestor).

The Usefulness of the BI Product

As has been indicated above, BR's and BB's are usually self-initiated and are of such character as to be of general use to the research divisions; the regional bureaus; the Special Assistant, Intelligence; certain overseas missions; the Central Intelligence Agency and its Director; and the Department of Defense and its components. The BR's and BB's are found useful by the persons and organizations to whom they are distributed in that they provide background information permitting an assessment of the strengths, capabilities, and weaknesses of the individuals connected with a national or international development, thereby shedding light on what that development may mean in terms of U.S. position and policy.

Biographic Directories are much in demand by the various intelligence research officers throughout the intelligence community

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who are concerned with study in depth of a particular country. They are also considered a valuable tool by the mission of the country being treated. For example, BI was requested by Embassy, Moscow to compile a Directory of the Soviet Government and the CPSU (including the 16 Republics) prior to the meeting of the 20th Congress of the CPSU on February 14, 1956. BI complied and thus enabled Embassy, Moscow, to report immediately to Washington all changes in organizational membership which occurred while the Congress was in session. This rapid reporting on the part of the Embassy in turn enabled the Intelligence area of the Department and the Central Intelligence Agency to more rapidly assess what was taking place in Moscow than had been possible during the course of any previous Congress.

The Departmental Instruction is the medium most commonly used for informing a mission of the background, character, characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of a new or recent appointment to the diplomatic or consular corps in the country in question. Foreign Service officers find such information extremely helpful in dealing with their counterparts.

The same is true of the Conference reports and other reports prepared for the White House, the Vice President, the Secretary, the Under Secretary, and the heads and deputy heads of other government agencies who often have occasion to travel to foreign countries and who always call on BI to prepare reports on the persons with whom they are likely to deal during the course of their travels.

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[REDACTED] CIA requests represent almost 50 percent of BI's request workload which is compensated for by an annual subsidization under terms of an agreement between the agency and the Department dated November 5, 1952.

The Key Personalities volumes and Sections 59 of the Political Chapters of NIS receive distribution at all levels within the intelligence community as well as to missions abroad, and on occasion, they are distributed overseas to friendly foreign governments. As they contain basic intelligence, as opposed to current intelligence, their primary use is in providing the most comprehensive background information possible on all aspects of a society for the use of Foreign Service officers, the military, CIA, and other authorized officials.

What is the Quality of the Product

In any discussion of the quality of BI's product it should be emphasized that it is only as good as the material available, and the analyst's evaluation of that material, can make it. A determined effort is made to give guidance to the Foreign Service in their biographic collection activities. Nonetheless, the Foreign Service is in many cases handicapped by shortages of personnel and further, it is a recognized fact that the biographic program of any mission is a success or failure depending upon the enthusiasm for the program (or lack thereof) on the part of the senior officer charged with its implementation. To illustrate, a survey was made in 1952 to test the reception that the BI product was receiving in the Department and the following statement was made analyzing the

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results of that survey: "BI products are widely used and praised at all levels in the Regional Bureaus. Unfavorable comments received from those areas where reporting is difficult." The same is true today.

Formal intelligence sources (Foreign Service, CIA, military services, etc.) are supplemented by arduous research and painstaking analysis. But if gaps in information exist and the required information is nowhere available the quality of the end product cannot but suffer as a result. Fortunately the product on the whole may be said to be good.

What is the Cost of the Product?

Cost of processing and filing	\$ 185,497.95
Cost of collection	50,590.35
Cost of production	<u>101,180.70</u>
	\$ 337,269.00

Competence and Training

Area and language specialization have been found to be essential qualifications for BI analysts. In its recruitment program, therefore, the Division is on the alert to find personnel with college backgrounds who have been trained in political science or history and who have intimate knowledge of a foreign country and at least a working knowledge of its language. Without such qualifications they are unable to properly exploit valuable sources of information (e.g., the native press,

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periodicals, handbooks, etc.) which are published in the language of the country under study, and they are unable to evaluate and interpret biographic developments in the context of the structure of the society of that country. Further BI analysts must have facility in written expression. The time factor is a vital one in BI's servicing operation and BI analysts must be able to rapidly, succinctly, and precisely correlate the information available on any one person or group of persons and present it in report form. BI is fortunate in having analysts on most of the more strategic areas of the world who meet these qualifications, but vacancies, present or potential, are extremely difficult to fill. This is especially true of recruiting for Far Eastern positions where the supply of qualified personnel is limited and the security clearance factor is a major one. BI encourages its employees to take specialized training in political science, research techniques, international communism, languages and area study offered by the Foreign Service Institute and other academic institutions which will improve their efficiency and effectiveness on the job. In this connection the great majority of BI analysts have taken specialized training courses during the past year. To date, however, it cannot be said that such on-the-job training is a real substitute for the person who has area and language background derived from actual experience in the area or who has specialized in the area during his academic years.

Matters to be Explored

- 1) The use of intelligence production in policy matters
- 2) The use of intelligence in operational matters

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- 3) The use of intelligence for background information
- 4) Overlapping and duplication in the collection, research, and production of intelligence
- 5) Coordination of intelligence collection, research, and production activities
- 6) The amount of administrative support received from their parent agencies by the intelligence organizations within Departments other than CIA in comparison to the administrative support received by other functions.
- 7) The role of intelligence in psychological warfare
- 8) Training and career development
- 9) Overseas intelligence operations
- 10) External research activities of all intelligence components
- 11) Security

The Board's Approach to its Problems

The Executive Order 10656, which established the President's Board of Consultants of Foreign Intelligence Activities, does not specifically state that the Board shall have a staff, but, as it is difficult to comprehend how such a Board could operate effectively without one, it is assumed for the purposes of this paper that a staff will be appointed.

Under these circumstances it is suggested that the staff's first efforts should be the establishment of close liaison with all intelligence components of the Government, in addition to CIA and including the FBI; that liaison should be established with the Bureau of the

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Budget; that consideration be given, in consultation with the White House, to the establishment of liaison with the Armed Forces Committees of the Senate and the House and with any Congressional Committee which is set up to exercise legislative surveillance over CIA; that if such a Committee is set up the Board attempt to act as a buffer between it and the intelligence community. Further, it is suggested that the Board might profitably decide upon a series of projects with which they planned to concern themselves and then ask appropriate agencies to submit detailed reports indicating their activities in connection with each project. These reports would provide background information to the Board on the basis of which priorities could be set up for investigation in depth of various functions.

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