

## AN AFIO STATEMENT ON REDUCTION OF PER

Against the background of the spate of stories circulating on the rationale for and impact of the impending reduction in CIA's Directorate of Operations, the AFIO President sought a meeting with a Senior Agency representative to elicit the basic facts. Admiral Turner and John Blake (Acting Deputy Director) received me on 18 November.

The Admiral assured me that the reduction represented no change in philosophy as to the importance of human intelligence in the overall scheme of things, that its role was recognized to be as vital as ever. He explained that the reductions in the Operations Directorate structure were concentrated almost exclusively in the headquarters element (only ~~13 overseas positions are to be eliminated~~), with the objective of developing a more streamlined, responsive and professionally challenged staff. He further stated that the reduction was an Agency initiative, not mandated by any external authority; and that, in large measure, it conforms to a plan conceived in the Operations Directorate itself prior to the Admiral's appointment. The essential difference is that whereas the original plan was to reduce the size of that Directorate by some 1300 positions over six years (with minimum "people" impact), the decision was to eliminate 820 professional and semi-professional positions prior to the end of 1978, with none planned after that date. Parenthetically, the doubling of rate of reduction heightens the "people" impact. The Agency strength will not be reduced correspondingly as substantial new requirements exist elsewhere in the organization.

The Admiral stated that the selection of the personnel to be terminated early next year was in accord with standing Agency regulations. On the other hand, he was frank to admit that the notification procedures left something to be desired. Employment termination dates would be adjusted, on a case-by-case basis and to the extent feasible, to mitigate hardship. Overall, the Admiral was convinced that the reduction could be implemented without adverse impact on the Agency's clandestine operational intelligence and counter-intelligence collection capability.

PERISCOPE is published quarterly by the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, Suite 303A, 5723 Whittier Ave., McLean, VA. 22101. Phone (703) 790-0320.

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The center line of AFIO interest in this matter stems from its conviction that a viable human intelligence capability is the indispensable complement to other collection means. Thus, AFIO is gratified by the assurance from the senior official of the U.S. intelligence community that the programmed reduction in the clandestine services does not portend any de-emphasis of the role of human intelligence.

Policy statement is one thing; implementation is quite another. AFIO accepts at face value the evaluation of the leadership echelon of the CIA that the reductions can be accomplished without deleterious effect on clandestine intelligence collection capabilities. None the less, two aspects of the reduction process will continue to command AFIO's attention. Both concern people who — more so than in any other institution — are hallmarks of an intelligence organization's competence, efficiency, and esprit.

The first recognizes the monumental problems of managing a cut of such severity in such a compressed time-period while still ensuring high operational capability and the "fundamentally healthy and patriotic attitude," that Admiral Turner states to be a characteristic of the Agency today. The designation of some 25% of the individuals to be eliminated from a single directorate has quite obviously generated morale problems of considerable magnitude. AFIO joins the chorus of voices which deplores the curtness of the termination notifications as well as the way those notifications were communicated and recommends these procedures be thoroughly reviewed. It is to be hoped that the lessons learned will be taken into account in managing the much larger increment to be designated for elimination in late 1978. Above all, AFIO will wish to be assured that there is no substantial loss in the continuity of operational experience and expertise on which future performance depends.

Our other concern — no less important — has to do with the welfare and future of the personnel being eliminated. Given the reductions already sustained by the Operations Directorate over the past four years, and also given the very high quality cross-section of that Directorate to begin with, the personnel involved are not "dead wood". To the contrary, they represent — individually and collectively — impressive talent, much of it unique. Unless personal preferences lie elsewhere, they should all be harnessed to key assignments, commensurate with ability, in other segments of public or private endeavors dealing with matters of national security. Nothing less would be equitable for the individual concerned or in the best interest of our nation. AFIO undertakes to do everything in its power to assist in this process. Several corporations have already approached us indicating interest in resumes of personnel being terminated. If the members of AFIO link arms in this effort, there is much we can do to place these worthy individuals in new fields of work.