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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Deputy Assistant Director for Operations
FROM : Executive Officer, OO/C
SUBJECT: CIA Seal.

DATE: 25 March 1948

Legal. Sec.

Per your verbal request, the following facts are submitted as justifications for the need of Congressionally-approved seal of organization for CIA.

The recently issued identification credentials for OO/C Contact Specialists bear an engraved CIA seal. However, it is my understanding that this seal has not received the formal Congressional approval necessary to establish its legality. Therefore, it is conceivable that any of our contacts in the field may make inquiries to the proper Government office of record to ascertain whether the seal is legal, which would establish the legality of the credentials. The Government office of record at the moment would have to make a negative reply which might conceivably cause considerable embarrassment to all concerned. Along the same lines, it should be noted that the original letters of introduction issued by the Director to our Contact Specialists in lieu of credentials bore an embossed seal. Because of the lack of an approved seal it would be a comparatively easy task to prepare fraudulent letters of introduction of this type. On 11 March 1948, this office received an inquiry from a contact in the New England area making reference to these letters of introduction signed by the Director and requesting advice, first, as to the authenticity of the letter, and secondly, as to whether the bearer himself was entitled to this letter. It is our opinion that if the letter had borne an embossed seal, the question of authenticity would not have arisen.

It has been suggested to us that a legal seal might well be embossed on CIA travel orders issued to those people performing temporary duty missions. The embossed travel order would again establish the legality and authenticity of the issuing agency and the travel order for administrative personnel would perhaps suffice as identification credentials and letters of identification.

As a last suggestion, it is believed a legal seal would be quite valuable when issued in conjunction with letters of introduction. With the knowledge and consent of the Executive for Inspection and Security, this Branch has, at times, requested the Assistant Director for Operations to give letters of introduction to several of our personnel when contacting individuals known to the Assistant Director. The seal again would establish the legality and authenticity of the letters of introduction.

[Redacted signature box]

JOHN F. BLAKE

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