

Serial #294

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OFFICE OF TRAINING

DIRECTIVE

COURSE: PHASE I - ORIENTATION

SUBJECT: Intelligence Officer Motivation & Qualification HOURS: 1

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INTELLIGENCE OFFICER MOTIVATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

The subject of motivation and qualifications of an intelligence officer is so intensely personal that anybody who speaks to you on it can only give you his own reactions and ideas in general. You won't find any authoritative writing on the subject; nobody in high places in this outfit has ever expressed himself authoritatively about it, and perhaps it's impossible to do that. But today I will give you my own point of view on this as a person who has been in the outfit for quite a while, and will deliberately stress the negative sides of the question, in order, I hope, to have you bring about in yourselves your own examination of your motivation and qualifications. There is no mechanism by which anybody else can do it for you; it's your life.

Let me begin by talking about the motivation for coming into the Agency in the first place--the majority of you are relatively newcomers, and have not seen much of the Agency yet--and then go on from there to the motivation for staying in the outfit after you know your way around. After a good deal of interviewing and hiring of large numbers of people in this organization, I've come to the conclusion that the principal motivation for coming to work for CIA, especially in the clandestine services, is a desire to get away from your family or from some other personal situation in which the interest in living abroad becomes very great. That is true of men and women alike; it is true of all levels of men and women in the outfit, to a large extent. Obviously there are many exceptions, but that, it seems to me, is the overriding reason people come into the outfit. They obviously don't come because they know what they're getting in for; they cannot have a liking for the work, because they don't know what it is. They do know that they would like to live abroad, that it may involve adventure, it sounds glamorous, and so forth.

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There is also, of course, an interest in serving your country, felt, in varying degrees, by practically everybody. The question is, though, why do you feel you need to serve your country in this agency rather than in many others? There are many other useful ways to serve your country in and out of government services or the military. How did you happen to pick this one? Those are questions to which the answer, by itself, is not very important. It's only when it is taken in context with what happens from now on.

I would like to begin here to stress the negative aspect of working for this organization, what you are giving up and how little you can expect in return, measured by the returns that people expect from most other jobs. Here are some of the things that you will not find in the outfit. Fame and fortune is the first. As for fame, we trust your name will never appear in Who's Who or the newspaper. As for fortune, the only large segment of the population with similar backgrounds and abilities to yours that is less well paid is the teaching profession. You could make more money with your particular skills in most other lines of endeavor. Probably not at first; surveys some time ago showed that a bright young man is likely to make more in government for a few years than in comparable jobs outside, or jobs calling for people of comparable quality, but that in the long run he'll actually make a great deal less. On the other hand, with respect to the money side, he'll probably do better in this outfit than in most other types of government service. At least that has been true up to now. That may be due to the fact that this outfit was new and growing, and the opportunities to rise in the business came faster.

It seems obvious to me that the opportunities will not come quite so fast in the future. The organization cannot continue to expand indefinitely, and we will have to settle down to a slower rate of growth, both personally and for

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the outfit. A slower rate of change, let's say, because increase of size has not always been real growth in the outfit. You certainly would not be able to say that you were not well treated as far as finances and other similar aspects of the business are concerned. But at any rate, regarding the fact that the people who come into this organization are well above the average, in abilities and background, those same people could, in most cases, make more money and get more of the obvious recognition of success outside this organization than in it.

As for the glamour, some of you certainly will find it--there is glamour in this outfit, but not for everybody and not for anybody all the time. There are bound to be long periods when your life isn't at all glamorous, and you can fall a victim to feeling that the glamour you may have expected to find in this outfit isn't there. I believe again that that is not as disqualifying from the point of view of the glamour as it may sound, because there have certainly been opportunities for change in the job, and a variety of experiences, both as to place and as to type of service.

Another negative aspect--I don't want to dwell on it--is that working in this organization will have an undoubted effect on your private life. In this organization as in few other activities you could engage in, the outfit has to take a very strong interest in anything in your private life which could possibly effect your work, and that is more than in most any type of work. In any line of activity it wouldn't be anybody's business if you drank too much, for example, as long as you did your job during the hours for which you were paid. That cannot be true here--the outfit must have a constant strong interest in all your habits, to a degree that would be nobody else's business if you weren't in this organization--your habits in respect to liquor and

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sex and money and many others are important. So you will have to accomodate yourself to having less private life and having what should ordinarily be your private life the business of other people, more than in almost anything else you could do. You also have less social life, probably--there's no rule or regulation that brings that about--it's just that after a while the people in this outfit tend to circulate among themselves only and you find, at least in the experience of a good many people, that you gradually constrict the social life you lead. You will see fewer and fewer people outside the organization unless you make a strong effort to keep up outside contacts, and most people don't, from my observation. You will end up seeing the same old faces, not merely all day and every day, you will see them at night and on weekends. To some people that has been a very severe handicap, and I have heard of one man in this organization who resigned because he said, "I can't bear to have lunch with the same people every day from now on for the rest of my life." That's a small handicap which exists or not as you choose to make it--I merely observe that most people don't make the effort.

Let me go on to the demands that you can make on the organization, and it comes down to practically none. For example, you cannot demand absolute job security of the organization. For the type of job security you do have, which is a good deal, you can get at least as much in many other less demanding types of work, so that if that is your interest, you could earn your living a great deal more easily in many other places. You can ask for congenial work.

Again you can't really demand that--the organization has done a great deal, I believe, to see to it that a man is in the kind of job that he likes. That was not so hard to do during the period when we were expanding extremely rapidly. It may be much harder to do from now on, where we are, in certain aspects of the work contracting.

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Mr. Kirkpatrick, who is head of the Career Service Board, said it was his opinion that it becomes necessary to insist that people serve where they can do the most good, rather than to allow what has been possible in the past to continue, namely, to let them serve where they most enjoy serving. Now, clearly, the outfit will have to take account of what you would like to do and of your own personal situation with regard to health and family circumstances and many others, but the time is probably coming when your choice of what you do and where you will do it will not be up to you, or at any rate it will be much less up to you than it has been in the past. That is imposed by the simple economic situation.

As for the other aspects of that same question--can you count on a congenial job? By and large, experience has shown, (and this again has been a more favorable situation because we were expanding), that people have been able to count on that, and also to change from one type of job to another. I'll develop that a little bit more in a minute, but as the organization stabilizes-- and we are clearly in a period which is meant to stabilize the organization-- I believe, in a period of much more realistic appraisal of what CIA is capable of and what it takes to accomplish that than has been true in the past, when we were the victims of every other element of government that had any interest in events overseas. We were constantly told to win the ^{cold} war immediately, and penetrate the Kremlin, and find out all the intentions of the USSR, and so forth. Since other mechanisms of government were not immediately geared to solving the extremely difficult problems that arose after the war, they have tended to say, "Let CIA do it"; in fact they insisted that CIA do it, and we have saddled ourselves with too many jobs, some of them far beyond the capacities of this Agency even if we had been in existence a hundred years and had trained people

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for whole lifetimes. Nowadays, the trend is toward a more realistic appraisal of what we can do. It is a smaller, tighter, better knit organization in general. That has its advantages and disadvantages for each one of us.

Let me change the subject slightly--to the demands that CIA can make upon you. They are, of course, great. I won't discuss these obvious points of hard work and long hours and the necessity for your mastering various abilities, or your possessing high intelligence--many of those would apply to many other jobs--but one of the peculiar things about this agency is the extent to which you are given very high responsibilities at a very early stage in your career. Very likely before you're ready for them. If you went into many other parts of the government, to say nothing of the outside world, you would serve a long apprenticeship in a thoroughly stabilized organization where you would work your way up very slowly, and until you reached near the top you'd have very little to do with making policies. That is not true in this organization. You are likely to have extremely grave responsibilities in your very first job, responsibilities for the lives of other people, for their welfare, and for the security of the United States.

Let's digress for the moment into matters of money. This organization, naturally, does spend a great deal of money. Far more for its size, I suppose, than any other in the government, and that means a good many million dollars. You will be the people spending that money, if not already, in a very short time. Let's leave out the question of whether you spend it honestly--we have very little trouble of that kind. Let's go into the point of whether you spend it with judgment, because there is no doubt that from our youth and inexperience, we have spent a great deal of money foolishly, as it turned out. I don't mean to say that we should expect all the money we spend to pay returns--that's

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another peculiarity of this business--we have to take a lot of chances, and back those chances with a great deal of money, when there isn't a chance in the world that more than half or a quarter of them will ever produce any good. That is a natural risk of the business which everybody must be prepared to take. Beyond that, though, there is no doubt that we have spent money foolishly which, at the time, more experience and more judgment would have avoided. That's another way in which we are all in training all of the time. We are learning to use this enormous weapon of money--and it is enormous for us--intelligently. Beyond that there is the peculiar connection between you and the Director of Central Intelligence in the expenditure of money, because he is personally on the tab for every nickel you spend. The money we spend in the clandestine services is not subject to auditing and to all the regulatory devices that the rest of the taxpayers' money is. The security situation requires us to be able to spend money without anybody else looking over our shoulder, and since you are the ones who will be spending it, and Mr. Dulles is the one who signs the bill for it and says, "I certify that this money was properly spent", your responsibility in that line is very much higher than if you were in any other part of the government. But that's only an illustration of the ways in which you get high responsibility at an early stage.

I have often seen situations arise in which an individual like one of you on his first overseas tour has suddenly faced a problem where the life and death of an individual were in his hands, and he had to know on the spot what to do about it. That has also applied to people in Washington, who otherwise have fairly plastic jobs compared to some of the excitement overseas. And again I've seen people arrive at 3:00 in the morning saying, "Shall we let "X" go back to his native land to rescue his wife and children from the Russians?"

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You have to know what, for the government's sake, rests on that decision as well as what is correct for the man's sake, and your saying he shall not go because of a security risk puts upon you the onus of what happens to the wife and children. If you say he shall go to rescue his wife and children, it puts upon you the onus of what that does to the security of the United States. Now that kind of responsibility comes at a very early stage in your career, and comes often. And you will have to develop a sense for meeting it. I do believe that that sets this Agency apart from any other that I know of, or from any other kind of work, where you face that necessity for accepting extremely grave responsibilities early and constantly.

The Agency also expects of you over the long pull a wide variety of responsibilities and skills. Not long ago I was trying to think—of all the hundreds of people I have worked with in this organization. How many are in the same jobs they were in three years ago? I couldn't think of more than about half a dozen. There is a constant shift of jobs, often of basic types of work. That has been all to the good. We have hired many people for one job and found they were better at another, and developed them accordingly. I've lost several secretaries to the intelligence business—they are now intelligence officers. The best intelligence officer I know began his life in this organization as a finance officer. Another of the best was hired as a sergeant in the Army to keep a safe house, and do nothing but see to it that the house was properly handled, with no intelligence responsibilities at all. He is now one of the best intelligence officers. Others with high promise as intelligence officers didn't work at all and found that they were much better doing some other kind of work. Beyond the career development aspect of it, though, there is the simple necessity for suddenly filling this job or that job, and consequently a variety of types of work you're doing and the

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responsibilities you have. That is, as far as I can see, a great advantage of this organization, but it imposes on you a necessity for a kind of flexibility which you will need to develop if you don't already have it. This is not a comfortable rut. Of course, there are many jobs that are comfortable ruts. If you are interested, you could stay in them the rest of your life, probably, but in general people don't. And on that point, if you are bored with your job, it's like the weather--just wait a minute--it'll change. You do change often enough so that nobody really has a right to get bored. If you find your own present work terribly dull and routine, that is something you will have to put up with at least for a while, but you can also get into other kinds. It's been done too often for me not to believe that it's possible, and fairly easy.

Let me go on, though, to the most delicate aspect of this question of qualifications and motivations both. Another way in which this organization is peculiar is that the Agency has to be able to count on you for a unique combination of absolute honesty and absolute dishonesty. Just as you are likely to spend a good many dollars in your career in this outfit, and to have many other grave responsibilities, the Agency must be able to count on you to carry out their responsibilities with a very much stronger sense of propriety than would be regarded as essential and respectable in most other lines of work. Just as your private life has to be above reproach, so especially does everything you do officially. That is not merely a matter of money by any means. It's a matter of honesty in reporting, for example. If you cannot be relied on to tell the absolute truth in a report of any kind, and you will be a reporter for the rest of your life, whatever else you are, you are worse than no good to the outfit. At the same time, you have to be able to be dishonest, though not to the Agency. Probably, if you have an active intelligence assignment, you will have to develop all sorts of evil arts which you were brought up to regard as

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unacceptable in civilized society. You will have to be able to lie, and cheat, and forge, and defraud, and no telling how much else. There have been people who resigned from the Agency because they did not want to face that. That is a question which you will have to answer for yourself. Do I find this work immoral? I will not try to give you any answer other than to say that I faced it as everyone else does, and I am here. But it does require a constant preoccupation with the morality of the business, and a constant discrimination by which you know when you are engaged in any kind of activity which the civilized world does outlaw in its civil dealings, that you are doing that for the good of your country and for no other good whatsoever. It is no answer to the problem to say that the other side does a great deal more than we do, which is perfectly true. It would be a nicer world if we didn't have to do it ourselves. However, this government some time ago came to the conclusion that it had to be done. And the question for you is, "Am I the guy to do it?"

I have harped on the negative aspects of working for this organization. I hope I have stirred up doubts in your mind which will persist until you have satisfied them. Either you find that this is not for you or you reach your own answers to problems and say it is. It would be a remarkable feat of personnel procurement if every person in this room turned out to be born for this job. Very likely there are people present for whom this is not the right kind of work. If the doubts I've been trying to raise lead you to that conclusion, I urge you to do what is best for yourself and for the outfit, and that is, leave. There will be no hard feelings. It is much better to recognize that, if it's true, at the earliest possible moment. You waste less time for yourself, you spend less of the taxpayers' money, and you end up doing the Agency no damage. On the other hand, there are a good many people in this outfit who have faced the problem long ago and recently since, and are convinced that this is the

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right work, that this work must be done for the country, and apparently they are the right people to do it. To offset these negative comments nearly all I can say is to take refuge in those two generalities: the work is necessary and the work is interesting. Well, I could glamourize both those words and give you sensational stories about some episode in the far-flung Iron Curtain countries— what a [REDACTED] did, or what [REDACTED] did, or 25X1A whatever else—to glamourize the necessity of the work and its interest.

I think I will pay you the compliment of not doing that, and say that those two generalities are enough to make a good many of the old hands in this organization consider it is the right work for them. And if you come to the same conclusions, after having asked yourself these questions, so much the better.

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