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ER-4-5203

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Director of Central Intelligence  
SUBJECT : Promotions to Supergrade Positions

1. PROBLEM:

Is it desirable and feasible to grant temporary promotions to occupants of supergrade positions?

2. ASSUMPTIONS:

a. The Agency will continue its policy of classifying and establishing its civilian positions in accordance with the general principles established by the Classification Act of 1949.

b. There will continue to be ceilings on the number of supergrade positions and people receiving supergrade ratings. These ceilings shall be determined by the Director.

3. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM:

a. In accordance with the Classification Act of 1949, all T/O positions are classified after evaluation as to the degree of skill, experience, training, and responsibility. When individuals are selected to occupy those positions they are also evaluated to determine if they meet the criteria. (Tab A)

b. After a trial period of one year an employee has the equivalent of a permanent appointment. Under law and Government practice a permanent appointee has certain expectations or privileges with respect to his grade, and particularly so, where he is covered by the Veterans Preference Act. One of the expectations or privileges is that so long as the individual satisfactorily performs his job

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are veterans. It is believed reasonable to expect that a senior officer of CIA having accepted a supergrade promotion with a clear understanding that it was temporary would not raise the technicalities.

b. The temporary promotion systems in other parts of the Government do not provide satisfactory precedents to warrant CIA establishing a similar system. Within the military system their need for temporary promotions is based on quite different considerations including the fact that although statutory authorization for the various permanent grades was geared to a peacetime military establishment, of necessity under an emergency size military establishment, additional grades were essential. Within the Department of State their temporary promotion program was also based on similar principles and in practice bogged down badly since it created many inequities and in addition was not extended to its career group, i.e. Foreign Service Officers. Within the Civil Service there is no permanent statutory authorization for temporary promotions, as such, since promotions are geared to gradual advancement of Civil Service employees and expansion where necessary has been taken care of through the hiring of indefinites who do not acquire career or Civil Service status. In addition, the Veterans Preference Act has further discouraged any temporary promotion program, even though informal, within the various agencies. (TabA)

c. The potential advantages to temporary promotions appear to be the possibility of more flexibility and the desirability of giving the man the pay applicable to the rating of the job in which he is performing duties. However, CIA has a ceiling on supergrade positions and it makes no difference for purposes of that ceiling whether they are temporary or permanent. Presumably some flexibility could be achieved in those situations where individuals are assigned to higher rated jobs requiring unique skills or experience. However, study of supergrade positions indicates that such situations would be based more generally on the greater degree of responsibility in the job rather than unique skills and experience

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for a particular position. There appears to be little flexibility to be gained in the Senior Representative positions since they are classified on a sliding scale. On the other hand, there are certain situations in which an individual is to replace an incumbent of a supergrade position for an extended period (i.e., one year or more). It would seem appropriate that while accepting the responsibilities of the position he should also have the rating or rank attached to the position. Also, it has been argued that when a man is placed in a higher rated position either permanently or for an indefinite period he should immediately receive the compensation attached to the higher rating, even though it be on a temporary basis. However, it is believed that more important than the compensation is the solid recognition and increased stature accorded the individual when he is granted a promotion with no strings attached. (Tab C)

d. In thinking of a long range Career Service for CIA, it can be said with some weight that an individual should progress naturally from one promotion to another and that he should receive a promotion only when it is believed that he is qualified to hold such a rating in one or more jobs. With a true career concept a promotion can be conceived of as a reward for prior satisfactory service and recognition of demonstrated ability to perform a job of greater responsibility. Such a promotion should be viewed as a milestone in the career of the individual and once having attained the rating it should not be taken away from him except for cause. For this reason, temporary promotion should never be considered as "probationary." (Tab C)

(1) Experience indicates another disadvantage in that there is a great tendency in a temporary promotion program for the individual to remain in that grade thus in the end defeating the designed purpose of the program.

(2) In those situations where there are no clear-cut reasons why the promotion should be considered temporary, the demotion when it does come

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has serious adverse effects on the individual and on his ability to deal with others.

(3) If we accept the comparison between the military and civilian with respect to "flag" ranks and supergrades, it becomes clear that a great deal of shifting from the general schedule below grade GS-15 to the supergrade category is undesirable.

5. CONCLUSIONS:

a. Although there are certain technicalities raised by legal requirements it is not believed that they are sufficient to deter consideration of a temporary promotion program if it is otherwise deemed desirable.

b. The temporary promotion practices of the military services, the competitive Civil Service, and the Foreign Service of the State Department do not provide a satisfactory precedent or basis upon which to establish a temporary promotion policy for appointees to supergrade positions in CIA.

c. Establishment of a program of temporary promotions for all supergrade positions is undesirable as having an adverse effect upon the individual and being inconsistent with the CIA Career Service concept.

d. Specific cases of temporary promotions in the supergrades would be feasible in those cases where the individual is deemed fully qualified to assume the greater responsibilities for a position and where it is known he would be replaced by the absent incumbent or proposed incumbent.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS:

✓ a. In selected cases where individuals are expected to occupy temporarily, for at least one year, supergrade positions higher than their present ratings, they be granted the rating attaching to the positions.

✓ b. Prior to any temporary promotion there be a determination that the

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individual is fully qualified to assume the duties of the higher rating and in no event should a temporary promotion be considered probationary.

✓ c. The individual concerned be advised that the promotion is temporary for the period he holds the position and an acknowledgment be secured from him.

✓ d. In each proposed personnel action relating to supergrades there be included consideration of whether or not the promotion should be temporary or permanent and the findings forwarded for the assistance of the appropriate approving authority.

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Acting Deputy Director  
(Administration)

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