

8 June 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Deputy Director for Plans

SUBJECT : Management of the CIA Historical Program and its Impact on the DDP Historical Effort

1. Paragraph 6 of this memorandum contains a recommendation for your approval.

2. From the outset the Clandestine Service (CS) has emphasized that among the primary uses for CS historical papers would be "as basic chronicles for the indoctrination of new Chiefs of Station, Branch Chiefs, Desk Chiefs and other key officers," and "as a type of case history for use by the Office of Training in the conduct of operations courses," and "to provide to those engaged in operational, organizational and policy planning, analytical documentation of previous CS programs and experiences....". These uses are clearly articulated in CSHB 5-13-1.

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3. In his 1965 annual report on the CS Historical Program, [redacted] on 28 February 1966, stated:

The present and future importance of [the] CS historical effort has been difficult to convey to many DDP officers. Simplified tools of the historian's trade have helped the officer who is not a research man and has no training as a historian. Thus standards are set for the production of historical type papers (emphasis added): debriefings and memoir-type reports, historical monographs on unique activities or programs, and chronological histories of the DDP at Headquarters and overseas.

4. In an August 1966 memorandum, the Executive Director-Comptroller expressed general satisfaction with the results of the historical effort of the Clandestine Service which, of course, was based on the

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principles set forth in the two preceding paragraphs. These principles continued to govern the CS program until the appointment of the new Chief, Historical Staff, O/DCI. He believes that CS histories ought to conform to standards of research, organization, and presentation that would apply to many fields of professional historiography. In particular, he feels that they ought to be comprehensive with respect to the total context in which activities were carried out. In a Station history, for example, there would have to be a careful interweaving of the various threads of FI, CI, CA, the current political and military situation, etc.--partly because these all affected each other, and partly because he believes a good history ought to convey an accurate sense of what the Station was doing and what it was like during any given period.

5. This approach, however suitable it is for the professional historian, creates special problems for the CS Historical Program:

a. Audience - Station histories so written would have limited use for indoctrination and training. It is questionable whether any CS reader would find the whole of such a Station history useful--worth reading, in short. A newly appointed chief of that station might, perhaps, find some value in such a history. Most of us, however, including most Station chiefs are more interested in having a history provide conveniently assembled answers to such questions as "What kind of FI (or CI or CA or liaison, etc.) activities succeeded at this Station, and why? What kind failed, and why? What lessons can we draw from this history as to our future efforts?" This usually entails a topical format which enables us to treat major elements of a station history so that a reader with a particular interest and need to know can have available to him just that separable* portion of the history relevant to his needs.


*CS histories have always been bound in a manner which permits sections to be separated and given to readers on a need to know basis.

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b. We believe that Dr. Ehrmann's high standard of professional historiography cannot be achieved by the CS officers who have been and are likely to be made available to the Program. The best we can hope for, given the large backlog and schedule of papers yet to be completed (or in many cases yet to be begun), is that each writer will accurately assemble a considerable body of facts, and then present them the best he can. It might be possible later on (but we cannot count on it) for professional historians to rework the data up to the standards Dr. Ehrmann expects. In the long run such comprehensive histories as he would approve would be better devoted to larger subjects than individual Station histories-- e.g. the work of the CS in Eastern Europe 1948-1956--or to monographs on narrower subjects like CIA and the Hungarian Revolution. Once the program of Station Histories has been completed we would like to go on to other types of operational histories, keeping always in mind that their educational value to the Clandestine Service and the Office of Training is of fundamental importance.

6. It is requested that you approve our continuing to record and document the organizational, operational, policy, and other relevant facts of the CS past in a manner best suited to the needs of the CS as determined by the CS Historical Board (CSHB).

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Executive Secretary
CS Historical Board

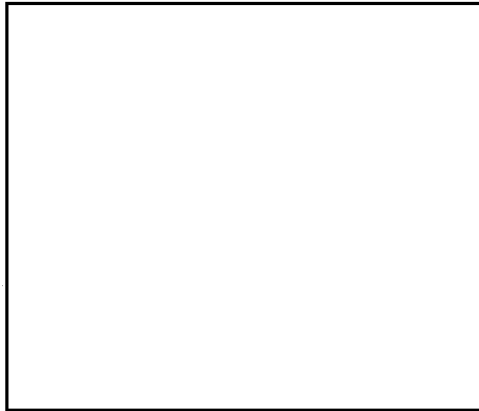
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CONCUR:

Hugh T. Cunningham, Chairman, CSHB

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Member, CSHB

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APPROVED:

Thomas H. Karamessines, Deputy Director for Plans

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