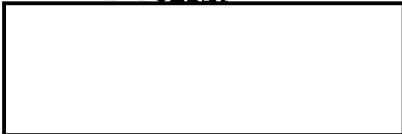


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Thomas Polgar



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September 3, 1982

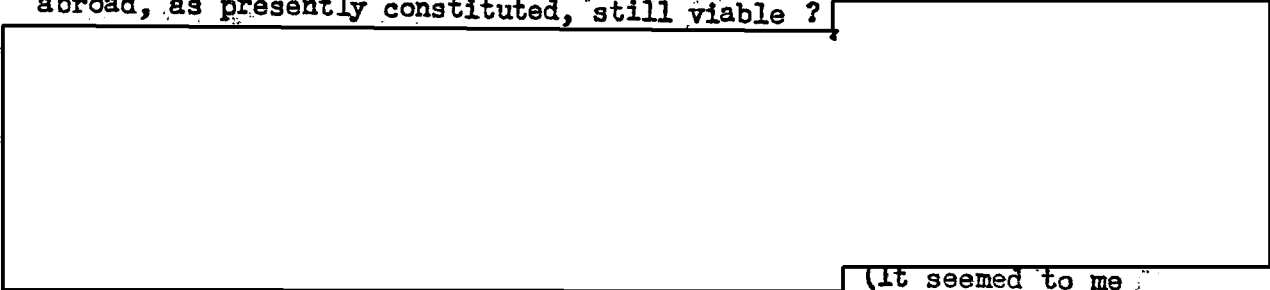
Mr. John N. McMahon
The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D. C. 20505


Dear John :

This is in reply to yours of the 4th of August in which you indicated that EXCOM will review the planning projections of the several Directorates around 13 September and then arrive at a preliminary decision to guide the development of a final (?) paper on planning by December.

The planning process outlined in your letter makes good sense in the context of developing "investment strategy models" and such are, of course, essential to help meet our obligations in the framework of the governmental budgetary processes. The inevitable budgetary constraints, even during the more generous years, force us to seek ways to -- as you put it -- "get the most bang for our buck" -- but the essential financial considerations also force the attention of our planners away from the substance of the mission. I referred to this in my letter of 20 July 1982 by pointing out that our planning appears to be related primarily to budgetary requirements, or as a basis for the respective components to ask for more in terms of manpower and other resources.

Conversely, relatively little or no attention is given to review or challenge some of the fundamentals which have guided our clandestine activities since World War II. Are our field stations abroad, as presently constituted, still viable ?



(It seemed to me during my last decade of service that our younger officers were simply not equipped intellectually to cope with the socio-economic problems that influence political decisions. As an example, just what kind of reporting  in advance of the economic calamities which will inevitably bear also on U.S. interests ?)

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From most countries of the world, our intelligence community will have to rely on overt reporting. The coordination of such reporting is the responsibility of the Ambassador (NSCID/2), but very few ambassadors take this coordination responsibility of theirs seriously and the results are uneven. Yet DDI cannot possibly do a good job without a continuing flow of reliable and timely overt reporting. Is not there something the Agency might do to assist the Ambassador to upgrade and systematize overt reporting from his mission? We would be robbing Peter to pay Paul, of course, if we were to try to superimpose such an additional requirement on the already overworked and overexposed Chiefs of Station.

Charles de Gaulle once observed that "Great powers have to choose between great difficulties. The United States is a very great power, and the American choices, therefore, are exceptionally difficult."

There is a lot of truth in that observation and it applies equally to CIA; being a very large intelligence agency as well as the leader in a gigantic intelligence community, the Agency is constantly confronted with a multiplicity of choices. Making the right decisions is not only difficult but will also be controversial.

As I suggested to you in my earlier letter, I think that you could be served well by a Planning Board or a "think tank" under whatever name. Such a unit could be a catalyst or sounding board for substantive suggestions and permit unhurried discussions of problems and possible solutions free of the pressure of deadlines and day-to-day executive responsibilities.

The above concepts were not intended to be either definitive or all-conclusive. I can think and read a lot in Maitland, Florida but I cannot test the validity or practicability of suggestions this far from the hub of events.

My retirement last year in no sense diminished my continuing eagerness to assist in the development and improvement of a service in which I have spent virtually all my adult years. If you can think of any way to utilize my services, I would be very happy to consider your proposal.

Yours, as ever

Tom Polgar

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