

TO:

[Redacted]

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FROM:

SUBJECT: Charter and Authorization of OPC

The NSC wrestled with the problem of covert operations for more than a year before ordering the establishment of OPC (under the name of OSP; Office of Special Procedures). Half way through that period of debate, NSC 4a, 17 December '47, directed the DCI to conduct covert psychological operations. This assignment of mission was based on the argument that "The similarity of operational methods involved in covert psychological and intelligence activities and the need to ensure secrecy and obviate costly duplication renders CIA the logical agency to conduct such operations." The specific direction was "to initiate and conduct, within the limits of available funds, covert psychological operations to counteract Soviet and Soviet-inspired activities which constitute a threat to world peace and security or are designed to discredit or defeat the US in its endeavors to promote world peace and security." The only restriction or direction as to the manner of executing the mission was a requirement to ensure "that such psychological operations are consistent with US foreign policy and overt foreign information activities", and that "appropriate agencies of the US Government, at home and abroad, are kept informed of such operations as will directly affect them."

The directive assigning this broad field of activity spelled out nothing with regard to the complex relationship with the Departments of State and Defense which was obviously required. The literal text, while it obviously required CIA to go to the departments concerned in order to be informed of the foreign policy and overt foreign information activities with which its activities must be consistent, left to the agency the entire question of deciding whether any contemplated

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undertaking was thus consistent. Only through the cumbersome and indirect route through the NSC, of which State and Defense were members and CIA a creature, did those two departments have machinery in being for passing upon undertakings of CIA in this new field.

After NSC 4a was issued, the DCI, Admiral Hillenkoetter, summoned the ADSO, Colonel Galloway, to a meeting to consider implementation of the directive. Galloway requested that the Chief, Foreign Branch "S", Harry Rozitske, attend the meeting as being more intimately informed on the subject, and Rozitske in turn requested [] [] attendance for the same reason. [] together with [] [] had been transferred from the psychological warfare components of OSS to SI/FSRO/SSU by General Magruder for the express purpose of preserving a nucleus of knowledge and experience in these fields. These four representatives of CIA thereupon met with representatives of the NSC, and as a result of this meeting [] was assigned to draw up a budget, recruit personnel, and institute operations. The new undertaking was designated Special Procedures Group/OSO, and [] [] was recruited as its chief. In its short life of six months, the unit recruited about a dozen individuals, including three of senior agent types and placed these three and [] himself in the field, where several minor targets of opportunity were engaged. They also launched substantial planning and research activities on [] [] and radio broadcasting projects, which were later abandoned because of State apprehension over diplomatic complications together with a leak to Drew Pearson in the case of the former. Both were of course revived at a much later date. It was [] concept that quick

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launching of pilot-scale operations would build up a base for more comprehensive planning more rapidly than an immediate start on large-scale planning in a vacuum, and this policy controlled the unit during its brief existence. As a result, there was a nucleus of personnel, a ~~medium~~ ^{modicum} of experience, and a measure of concrete operational background which OPC took over when it replaced SPGroup.

The evolution of NSC 10/2 is intimately tied to the position of the State Department, which was the area of the Government with the greatest and most immediate stake and responsibility in the large field of which psychological warfare is only a part. It is clear from the public record that the State Department did not immediately recognize the USSR as the threat to the US and the rest of the anti-Communist world that it has since so clearly proved to be. In this the State Department was in full harmony with the National Administration, but not with a small but intense group of government officials, most numerous in the military departments, who had had a realistic and informed grasp of the significance of the USSR not only from VJ-Day onward, but during World War II as well. It is easy to exaggerate the wisdom and size of this group in the light of hindsight. It is equally easy to discount the force and momentum of the post-war Roosevelt love feast today when the feeling of that time is so cold and dead. But insofar as there were loyal and convinced lieutenants in Government supporting the thesis that the USSR could be a member of a benign and humane concert of nations, such lieutenants were, in 1945 and 1946, more numerous in the State Department than anywhere else. But in 1946, with the definite shift in foreign policy, the

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State Department in general and its Policy Planning Staff in particular soon arrived at a definitive and realistic policy of opposition to the USSR and prevention of its further expansion. However, this policy was distinctly not an embrace of the opposite extreme and a turning to extreme reaction and conservatism^{VI} in the US attitude toward the other nations of the world. It occurred at a time when the strongest theory of government opposed to that of Soviet Communism in Europe was socialism. The line was drawn between political democracy on the one side and political totalitarianism on the other, rather than between right and left, there being no confusion then as to whether our common interest lay with Atlee or with France⁰.

What this adds up to is that the State Department was a late comer in appraising the situation as between the US and the USSR, its reaction was thorough and realistic, but since its reaction was not characterized by the normal extremes of a swinging pendulum in popular feeling, its reorientation was in some measure suspect among those who maintained that the entire political spectrum throughout its gradations from left to right was pari passu a scale from evil to ~~eternal~~ virtue. Matching the distrust of State Department thinking in other areas of the Government was a distrust on the part of the State Department of the wisdom and judgement of any other area of the government in matters of propaganda and the associated and interrelated elements of psychological warfare. Also, at this period, the State Department was supersensitive on matters of diplomatic propriety, in considerable contrast to the bolder and more hard-boiled attitude to be found five years later. From one cause and another, including but

not confined to the preservation of its own empire, the State Department had no intention of tolerating encroachment by others on its domain of foreign information, however much the scope of that domain might shift and expand.

It was in this context that the State Department took the lead in the NSC in early 1947 in the development of a successor to NSC 4a. This same mistrust of other agencies in matters pertaining to psychological warfare has remained a factor in all interdepartmental and interagency handling of the problem up to the present. There is no question that the gaps and incompleteness of NSC 4a called for a successor paper, so State was in considerable degree moving into a vacuum. It filled that vacuum in determined fashion. About the only element of NSC 4a that was retained in NSC 10/2, 18 June '48, was the argument that led to selection of CIA as the place where covert psychological operations should be centered. In addition to ensuring effective control of such operations by the State Department, that department made a strong bid for the support of the Defense Department by including it in the agencies from which the new office of CIA should derive its policies and guidance, preserving for the time being at least the primacy of State over Defense by ceding to the Defense Department the primary interest in war time in return to acknowledgement of State primary interest in peace time, which was the then status of world affairs. Thus representatives of both departments were nominated for the assignment of guiding the new office into conformity with US foreign and military policy and overt activities. In addition, the power of nominating the chief of the new office was reserved to the Secretary of State. His

a former OSS field officer and

nominee was then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas, Frank Wisner, who has headed CIA's covert operations ever since.

Anything that was left unexplicit in NSC 10/2 in June was made clearly explicit by August. On 12 August '48, George Kennan, Policy Planning chief for the State Department met with Admiral Souers for NSC, Admiral Hillenkoetter for CIA, Robert Blum for the Defense Department, and Wisner, who had taken over the reins as Assistant Director for Policy Coordination. The record of this meeting is in the form of a memorandum of interpretation prepared by Wisner. According to this document, Kennan reviewed the terms of NSC 10/2 and then commented that the head of CPC must take his direction from the Departments of State and Defense. Kennan himself, as the State Department appointee, would give such direction, he said, and he would require that he be kept informed on all planning and on any operational matters that had policy implications, but he did not require that he be informed of operational minutae and details. Hillenkoetter stated he saw no great difficulty in Kennan's point of view, noted that OSO already enjoyed many special privileges and much autonomy, and noted that his primary requirement was that he be kept informed, and that Wisner would be able to see to that. Thus, at a supra-agency level, was born the divorce between operational responsibility and administrative and logistic authority that remains to plague the covert components of CIA today.

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