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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Panelists in CIA "Youth and Student Problems" Forum Put On and Put Down "CIA Youth"

1. On 11 February 1971 I went to the panel session on "The Agency and American Youth," a part of the CIA Youth and Student Forum. I went despite my conviction that it would be of little positive value given the Agency's general attitudes toward itself, including:

--information is acquired for its utility, not its value to understanding;

--the Agency is so concerned with an elusive concept called "image" (which it thinks need only be projected, not received) that it lies to itself; and

--perceptions which differ from the official line are considered attacks on objective reality rather than on official perceptions.

Despite my reservations, I was more than usually disappointed in how the Agency chooses to hold itself out to its own employees--who know better.

2. Just by way of example, I could not believe that the Agency had decided to think well of itself when it said, in effect,

--our recruiters are learning that 'you can't tell a book by its cover' (when the Office of Personnel was speaking of recruiting individuals who affect the dress fashions prevalent among their contemporaries);

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--that the Office of Medical Services was surprised to find that new personnel who have blown pot (smoked marijuana) appear no different from their contemporaries who have not (or did not admit it); and

--the Office of Security is so up tight about drugs that its response to questions is to (figuratively) shake its finger at the audience and warn them that all of them would have a "Drug Problem" in their families some day.

And the examples of this kind of attitude were innumerable in the short space of an hour. Perhaps illustrative is the proud announcement that the Agency's attitude toward unwed mothers has shifted from one of discipline to "compassion." A more appropriate characterization would have been "condescension." When the Agency speaks to its own 'youth' that way, it says it doesn't really understand what is driving people but it will try to tolerate it.

3. And I submit to you that what is at the basis of a great deal of unrest, of changing perceptions, and of new value structures is a decision that people are tired of being tolerated, condescended to, and treated as a unit of work rather than a human being.

4. Not that the Agency doesn't try in many ways. Its fatal flaw is that it thinks it succeeds. As one (older) member of the audience put it, the members of the audience who disagreed with the speakers were relatively "conservative" or they wouldn't be at CIA --if they were radical the Agency would really be "in trouble." I agree that the Agency would be "in trouble," not because it could not perform its essential missions but because it probably couldn't adjust to a different way of doing business.

5. And the picture that the Office of Personnel painted of the seething ferment of new organizational forms (from the Management Advisory Group to office-level rap sessions) would have gone over to a naive

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outside audience, but it left CIA's own employees--most of whom had never heard of the MAG (and haven't missed anything thereby)--feeling that they were somehow out of step.

6. To an increasing extent--if the Agency is lucky --some new perceptions of doing business will permeate upward year by year. It may come even faster as the "CIA middle aged" see their own perceptions changing. But resistance by feigning understanding is more likely to destroy this trend than outright hostility.

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(12 Feb 71)

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