

ERATIONS GROUP FILE

15 October 1979  
MAT 9007

MEMORANDUM TO: Chief, Daily Reporting Division

SUBJECT : Trump-Conn Report

I. OBSERVATIONS

Upon a close reading of the Trump-Conn report, I find that it is simplistic, repetitious, contradictory and to a great extent belabors the obvious with offering detailed practical solutions.

The main thrust of the report, indeed what is described as the "basic problem," is that of improving the morale of DAILY REPORT editors. The report suggests that by providing the editors with a more structured training program, greater challenges, more authority and a perkier working environment where they can experience pride in and recognition of their work, boredom, restlessness and discouragement would magically disappear. This the psychological approach commonly applied in private industry to soften the debilitating effects of assembly line lolltrums. How can anyone argue with this, if it is true?

How does the report suggest we accomplish this? We learn that first we should have a more aggressive recruitment posture, utilizing journeyman editors in field interviews aimed at those with journalism backgrounds or interests. This, we are already doing. I fail to see how FBIS, in particular the Daily Reporting Division, can be any more aggressive that it already is. From my experience as DRD projects officer in charge of recruitment, I can assure you that the number of applicants and qualifications are not a problem. If we chose, we could be literally inundated with applications. Thus, I feel that recruiting trips are an unnecessary waste of time, effort and money. Where we are hurting is in the area of minority recruitment, particularly regarding Blacks.

The report basis much of its argument on the fact that some  editors left the DRD in 1978; "a rather horrendous attrition of close  of all editors." Yet it fails to go into detail as to what prompted the exodus. How many were for reasons of marriage or personal problems? How many were transferred to other FBIS components on rotation? How many left the editorial ranks through promotion? In other words, how many actually left for reasons of poor morale?

Next, the report suggests that a structured training program, including substantive knowledge, would not only better prepare the editor, but would improve morale. Continuing, the report makes the

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obvious point that too many trainers are "ruinous from the standpoint of a structured training program," advocating that a "buddy" system be implemented. Yes, this may be true, but do we really want or need only a structured training program in Headquarters? Can an unstructured program or a combination of both be just as effective? However efficient a buddy system of instruction may be, I fail to grasp how this differs from the idea of too many trainers being ruinous. With the buddy system, you would have as many and varied training programs as the number of trainees, not to speak of the horrendous effect it would have on production and assignments. On page 12, the report suggests that "those returning from their first tour should be employed in training new editors at the DAILY REPORT desks ...." Further on the same page, the report suggests that "more senior editors ... would supervise the training ...." On page 15, the report recommends that "a managing editor, executive editor, or editor-in-chief ... would supervise training of newly hired editors" On page 16, the report recommends that "the duties of the branch chiefs should be expanded to include training of new editors." What I want to know is who is in charge of the "structured" training?

Now that we've trained these people, how do we provide them with challenging work utilizing their talents effectively in a perky atmosphere? Well, first of all we learn we are not editors doing editorial work but mere drudges in the worst job in FBIS using silly pencil marks to change a word here and there and checking spelling and punctuation which is neither challenging nor does it provide the editor with sufficient work! I find the latter claim a bit old since one of the difficulties in involving book and branch chiefs in training and other tasks when I was DRD projects officer was the vociferous and constant complaint that the overwhelming workload prevented this.

The report suggests that to accomplish our above-mentioned goals, we should revamp the actual editing process, hiring qualified personnel as an interposing step between the field editor and DAILY REPORT editor to perform the tasks of sorting, capitalization, punctuation, proofing and so on. This would then allow the editor time to concentrate on more fulfilling and important tasks such as substantive editing, "rewriting," selecting, organizing, "revising" and so on.

It is my opinion that hiring part-time editors to perform the more mechanical functions would be merely adding an unnecessary step in the editing process. The report maintains that the tasks of counting words, capitalizing, and in general making those silly pencil marks are going to draw people of intelligence and dedication, "tapping a new pool of talent" and providing an element of stability and continuity to the editing of the books. This, the report concludes, would have a remarkable effect

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on the final product. That belief is at best naive. What makes the report think that if this type of work is not attractive to editors, it will be to this "new pool of talent?"

Regarding "rewriting" and "revising" copy, I don't think Trump and Conn really came to grips with what FBIS is all about. Sure, there are noncommunist items of straight reportage that could be more heavily edited, but rewritten? I have strong doubts. Combining items, excerpting, writing editorial reports, more liberal use of editorial notations, cross-referencing, all these are legitimate editorial functions and should be utilized to the fullest. No one is asking or wants the editors to be creative--that's not our purpose, leave that to the analysts--but commonsense, intelligence? that we need a lot of.

The report also recommends that the editors be relieved of proof-reading chores. I am in full agreement. Hiring proofreaders would free the editors to concentrate on more important tasks such as training, quality control and organizing and preparing copy for the next day's book. It would also make unnecessary the staggered hours concept of coming to work at 5 am and eliminate the need to add one more level of editorial intervention with the introduction of copy editors who would capitalize, punctuate and count lines.

In discussing the practice of rotating editors from area to area without allegedly allowing them time to acquire area knowledge and expertise, the report cites such comments as "sometimes a new editor in the field will make a change and an analyst at Headquarters will think there is a new policy." A bit farfetched in my opinion and I would think more derogatory of analysts than editors. "The DAILY REPORTS are remarkably good ... given the qualifications of the personnel," which the report implies is a criticism of editorial expertise. Now that sounds like something an analyst would say, if you will pardon my prejudice.

According to the report, this is evidence that editors should become more specialized in the areas they happen to be working, noting that being generalists or at least being bounced hither and yon from assignment to assignment leads to errors of fact and editing which "do not reflect the accuracy and dependability and authority for which FBIS has become known." The report fails to realize that this has been the practice for years; i.e. having rotatable editors with generalized knowledge. So, how come FBIS has such a good reputation? Or, to put it another way, why all of a sudden is this practice wrong when we've been doing it for years and building a solid reputation? Is this an example of the snobbishness or jealousy of specialized labor?

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The report does make some good points, one being the morning meeting needing greater interchange between branch chiefs and the attendance of a senior analyst. The morning meeting is definitely one area that could be improved upon.

Regarding the section on environment, I find it quite amusing that the report thinks the DAILY REPORT should hum with activity. I suggest we recruit a professional hummer with the job description "Happy Hummer" so as to accurately reflect his duties and so as to provide the necessary background accompaniment to our happy editors.

I also had to chuckle over the reference to "flying squads" of editors rushing thither and yon over the globe as FBIS firemen putting out all those nasty little brushfires. Sounds great, very glamorous, but not really worth the effort since it is not needed that often and in most cases can be accomplished by using editors already in the field. Perhaps this might be a viable concept in the future if we continue the trend toward minibureaus where staffing is tight.

One point in the report I wholeheartedly endorse is the idea of all bureaus periodically evaluating and classifying radio and press sources. This would be of great benefit to DAILY REPORT editors, especially new ones.

Whereas the report strongly urges the adoption of a "news of the week in review" section in order to bring into focus unrelated events, I strongly urge that it not be adopted. This is not the job of the DAILY REPORT, which provides packaged raw intelligence, but rather more of a function of the analysts. In addition, this type of feature would eventually have a life of its own and consume immense amounts of resources, besides competing with the weekly Trends. It would also raise questions of classification and be vulnerable to strong criticism.

On another point, the report suggests that to resolve the problem of having to determine the number of pages according to available typists the whole typing operation be contracted out, including proofreading. This is somewhat surprising considering that earlier the report points out the drawbacks of utilizing contract typists, stating: "It is a credit to the Managing Editor's Staff that 342 pages were typed and that for most of the month close to 400 pages were typed daily." The report misses the point that eliminating inhouse typing was part of an unsuccessful attempt at automation and that the present setup is a compromise solution as an interim measure anticipating further attempts to automate.

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## II. SUGGESTIONS

### 1. Recruitment

I believe we can improve our recruitment of minorities by exploiting the numerous Black educational institutions in the D.C. area. This can be done through personal contact with guidance counselors and advisors at these institutions who could be briefed on FBIS and what it does. In addition tours of FBIS Headquarters and briefings for area Black college students could be instituted.

Instead of relying wholly on application forms and files which to a certain extent fail to take into consideration FBIS needs, I suggest we correspond directly with applicants rather than going through non-FBIS offices. We might also draw up an FBIS questionnaire to be filled in by those applicants we are interested in from a review of their files. Attached to the questionnaire would be a general description of what FBIS is and just exactly what it does. This would not only give applicants a better idea of what they are applying for, but would also give us a better idea if we want their services. As it now stands, few applicants come in for personal interviews knowing just what type of job they are applying for, only that it's a position with the CIA. In other words, use the Agency recruitment system to select prospective candidates by reviewing their applications and files, but once interested, we should correspond with them directly via the above-mentioned description and questionnaire. Only then, if we are still interested, would we ask that a personal interview be scheduled.

### 2. Training

The person responsible for training new DRD editors should be the projects officer, who should establish a formal training program emphasizing FBIS style and format, particularly how it applies to work on the DAILY REPORT. This program should include briefings on just what the DAILY REPORT is and how it's used, what the duties and responsibilities of an editor are. In this effort, the assistance of branch chiefs should be enlisted. The wire chief should be responsible for general training in field and wire procedures when the editors are assigned to the wire before going overseas or before being assigned to Panama or Okinawa for field training. The senior editor on each book would, under this program, be in charge of providing daily guidance as needed to the new editor once they have completed the formal training program which should not last more than two weeks.

### 3. Proofreading

I am all in favor of hiring proofreaders in order to free the editors to concentrate on more important tasks. The time saved could be

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used for training, quality control, book preparation and so on. There should be at least two readers per branch trained in proofreading and typing in the event MES needs assistance.

#### 4. DAILY REPORT Layout

Any effort to improve the readability of the books, not just looks, is a worthwhile goal. This includes more readable type, double instead of single columns, more subtitles to break up lengthy items, but not cartoons and maps which do nothing to add to but rather detract from the substance of the items.

#### 5. Morning Meeting

I would like to see during the morning meetings more input from branch chiefs regarding what is being published in that day's books and in what manner. What the lead story is and how it is going to be handled. After all, just what is the purpose of the meeting? To my mind, it is to brief the DRD chief on information received and what is to be published. It is also to provide an opportunity for branches and MES to exchange information and make recommendations. Only that which affects the production of that day's DAILY REPORT or production in general should be discussed. All other issues should be addressed in separate meetings for that purpose if necessary.

#### 6. Quality Control

Although barely touched upon in the report, quality control is to my mind one of the most important aspects of the DAILY REPORT. I strongly urge that a quality control system be set up under the authority of the DRD deputy chief in which not only copy but how a bureau handled a significant situation or event would be critiqued. All comment and recommendations would be channeled from the senior editor through the branch chief to the DRD deputy chief who would periodically extrapolate appropriate comment for forwarding to the bureau involved. This system would also apply to DRD editing and book composition.

[Redacted Signature]

Chief, Athens Unit

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