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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP

PROVISION FOR COVERAGE OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PRESS
IN THE UNITED STATES

Memorandum by the Director of Central Intelligence

1. In accordance with C.I.G. Directive No. 4 the Central Planning Staff conducted a survey to determine if coverage of the foreign language press in the United States is desirable for intelligence purposes, what personnel are available for the work, and which agency or agencies should be responsible for such a project.

2. As a result of this survey the Director of Central Intelligence concludes that:

a. The Department of State has a primary need for a comprehensive coverage of the foreign language press in the United States.

b. The Department of State should develop this source to the extent determined by its needs and capabilities.

c. Competent personnel appear to be available.

d. This collection effort and the distribution of its results should be coordinated by the Director of Central Intelligence to ensure that it serves the interests of all agencies subject to N.I.A. coordination.

3. No action by N.I.A. appears to be necessary.

4. It is recommended that the Intelligence Advisory Board concur in the draft C.I.G. Directive (Enclosure "A") for issue.

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ENCLOSURE "A"

D R A F T

PROPOSED C.I.G. DIRECTIVE

PROVISION FOR COVERAGE OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PRESS
IN THE UNITED STATES

Memorandum by the Director of Central Intelligence
with the Unanimous Concurrence of the
Intelligence Advisory Board

Pursuant to paragraph 3.a. of the President's letter of 22 January 1946, which gives the Director of Central Intelligence authority to make full use of the staffs and facilities of the intelligence agencies of the Departments subject to N.I.A. coordination, the following policies and procedures, relating to the coverage of the foreign language press in the United States, are announced:

1. The Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Research and Intelligence, to the extent of his capabilities, will develop the coverage of the foreign language press in the United States in order to meet his own and other departmental needs for foreign intelligence information from this source.

2. The intelligence information collection effort involved in the performance of the mission assigned in paragraph 1, above, and the distribution of the information collected will be coordinated by the Director of Central Intelligence to ensure that it serves the interests of the intelligence agencies subject to N.I.A. coordination.

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ENCLOSURE "B"

DISCUSSION

Note: The term "foreign language press" as used in this discussion refers to newspapers, magazines and pamphlets published in a foreign language in the United States. It is not to be confused with material printed in a foreign language but published abroad.

1. By memorandum of 20 February 1946 (1), Mr. Alfred McCormack, then Special Assistant to the Secretary of State in charge of Research and Intelligence, suggested that the Director of Central Intelligence take under advisement the matter of determining what coverage of the foreign language press in the United States is desirable for intelligence information purposes and how the coverage should be obtained. This matter falls logically under the provisions of paragraph 4.b., N.I.A. Directive No. 2. Accordingly, C.I.G. Directive No. 4 ordered a survey of the subject.

2. The matter was discussed with representatives of the State Department, MID, ONI, A-2 and FBI. In addition the matter was discussed with Mr. Harry T. Smith of the New York TIMES and Mr. Jacob Landau of the Overseas News Agency in New York City, both of whom follow the foreign language press in the United States.

3. Before the war the foreign language press was little exploited as a source of foreign intelligence information, although some use was made of it as a check on subversive activities of foreign groups in this country. The F.B.I. in the discharge of its mission related to internal security, collected information on foreign language newspapers as to editorship, financial backing, influence, etc.

4. During the war the foreign language press became of considerable interest to several government agencies. The F.B.I. intensified its coverage of this source for information on foreign groups and individuals. MID, ONI and A-2 searched

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magazines and newspapers published in foreign languages for any information of value. This coverage was undertaken to avoid overlooking any source which might yield any information of intelligence value concerning countries blacked out due to enemy control. The State Department during this period made little use of information gleaned from foreign language newspapers and magazines.

5. The only agency to engage in a comprehensive coverage of the foreign language press was the Foreign Nationalities Branch, OSS. This coverage was performed in connection with research into origins, political and economic developments and psychological reactions of foreign groups in the United States as the basis for reports on the composition and activities of such groups. In addition to their own reading and analysis of foreign press material, the Foreign Nationalities Branch paid the Overseas News Agency in New York \$1,000 per month to prepare periodic summaries of excerpts from newspapers and magazines serving various foreign groups in this country. This service provided only translation of selected material with guidance by the Foreign Nationalities Branch.

6. Organized coverage of the foreign language press in the United States, for government agencies, ceased with deactivation of the Foreign Nationalities Branch, OSS, in the fall of 1945. Certain officers of the Department of State read some of the foreign language publications produced in the United States to the extent required by its obligation to search out subversive tendencies among foreign language groups in the United States. The Overseas News Agency continues to cover the foreign language press in the United States in order to provide a news service to its private subscribers, but states that it does so at a considerable financial loss and is preparing to abandon this service. Mr. Harry P. Smith, of the New York TIMES, reads daily and weekly publications in some seven foreign

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languages, in addition to his normal duties as a proof-reader, but this is purely to furnish possible bases for news stories in the TIMES. No distribution of the products of these various efforts is made to government agencies.

7. The F.B.I. is satisfied with its present coverage as a check on subversive activities, and MID, ONI, and A-2 are of the opinion that the value of this source of intelligence information does not warrant their contributing personnel, funds or facilities to achieve comprehensive coverage.

8. Information of the type obtainable from the foreign language press in the United States is required primarily by the State Department as follows:

a. By research personnel as background material for intelligence studies;

b. By geographic divisions for analysis of influence of foreign pressures on foreign language groups in the United States;

c. By the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs as a means of measuring the effectiveness of its foreign language propaganda.

The Department of State would welcome the re-establishment of a comprehensive coverage of the foreign language press in the United States, but does not possess the funds required to support such coverage.

9. A small portion (apparently eight or ten persons) of the now scattered Foreign Nationalities Branch of OSS, is still in Washington and could, no doubt, be engaged by the department if the need and funds to support it exist.

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